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[GRACE NODDED GAILY AND HELD OUT HER HAND.]

THE NEWS FROM YORKTOWN.

CHAPTER I.

This is he
That kiss'd his hand away in courtesy;
This is the ape of form, Monsieur the nice.

A FEW hours' drive from Yorktown, in Virginia, there stood, a century ago, a stately mansion of brick and stone. The house had been erected by one Guy Agincourt, in the beginning of the reign of Queen Anne, in imitation of the old Elizabethan Hall that had once been his ancestors' in England.

The Agincourts prided themselves, and not without reason, on their ancient blood. They had been originally Norman barons; had followed the Conqueror to England; had fought at Hastings; and had subsequently been rewarded with numerous manors out of the confiscated estates of the hapless Saxon thegns. But, alas! afterwards they had been less successful. In the time of Charles the First they took the royal side.

The Agincourt of that day mortgaged his estates to raise money for the king, and when the latter died on the block, emigrated, a ruined man, to Virginia. Here, with what was saved from the wreck of his fortunes, he bought several thousand acres of land.

In time he learned to love the new country better than the old. His eldest son, however, was sent home, for he still called England by

that title, to be educated, and that son, when in due time he came to the estate, also decided to remain in America. He it was who built the mansion-house of which we speak, and called it Agincourt Hall. It was a stately edifice, with wide, mulioned windows and Tudor gables. Great wide-spreading trees, not to be equalled even in England, dotted the lawn, singly or in groups, some of them coming quite close up to the hall-door.

From father to son the Agincourts continued to inhabit the Hall, celebrated, far and wide, for their splendid hospitality. They were known as Guy, or Bryan, in alternate generations; were always educated abroad; but always returned to Virginia when they wanted to "settle down," as they called it.

The War of Independence found Guy Agincourt, the third of that name, living there, a man of sixty-five, with a son at Oxford, a daughter just coming into womanhood, and a second son, the child of his old age, a lad of four. In secret he was a Royalist, like his friend and contemporary, Lord Fairfax, but he was less outspoken, perhaps because he was more cautious in temperament. Perhaps, also, he had not forgotten how one great estate had been lost a hundred and thirty years before by a too prominent assertion of its owner's opinions.

At the time at which our narrative begins, in the spring of 1780, the popular cause was considered by many to be as good as lost. It is true that Burgoyne had surrendered long before, and that the royal army was cooped up in New York idle.

But on the other hand the southern colonies were regarded, at least by sanguine loyalists, as conquered. Greene had not yet begun to turn

the tide of victories, the paper money was discredited, and the credit of Congress was at its very lowest ebb.

"Now is the time, father, to strike," said old Mr. Agincourt's eldest son, who had just returned from Oxford, full of the impetuosity of youth as well as of the fervour of royalism. "I have it confidentially that you are looked on with suspicion in the highest circles at home. Your hesitation is contrasted with that of our great ancestor under King Charles, the martyr, and when his gracious majesty comes to his own again here, as I am sure he will, that displeasure will be shown. For God's sake come out like a man!"

"I am too old, Bryan," said the enfeebled father, "I am too old. You are younger and can take an active part if you really—"

"That is what I have come home for," interrupted the son, hotly. "Gad, sir, I got ashamed at the last and dare not show my head hardly anywhere. My Lord North, though the best-hearted man alive, looked at me coldly all the winter, and the king at the last levee asked me significantly how long it took to go to Virginia. and if I meant to be a soldier."

"Well, well, have it your own way," was the answer. "If I were twenty years younger, Bryan, I would do as you are going to do. I don't say this publicly, because there's no need for it, but at heart I am as loyal to his majesty, God bless him, as any of my ancestors were. Only with my gout and that heart-trouble, which Dr. Neld says any shock would make fatal, it would be death for me to take the field."

"Perhaps you are right," answered the son, after a pause. "I never meant that you should go into active service; but I thought you ought

to declare your sentiments. However, as that would make living here unpleasant, nearly all, as you know, being such rascally rebels, it is as well perhaps to go on as you have begun. Only I must take care to represent the truth in the proper quarters."

"You see, my neighbours are such excellent people and old friends too," resumed the father. "Now, for instance, the Aylesburys—"

But here the son broke in.

"Ah! yes, the Aylesburys. That's another thing I want to know about. I've only been here six days, but I've kept my eyes open, and in that time young Aylesbury has been here six times. What the deuce does it mean?"

"Mean? Why, nothing. Nonsense!" divining at last his son's thought. "Your sister is to marry her cousin, as we all know. That is so well understood that no more need be said about it."

"But does this young popinjay, who is the rankest rebel I have yet talked with, know of the arrangement?"

"I—I—well, I hardly can tell," stammered the father. "The young fellow, like yourself, has just come home and may not have heard."

"Yes, and having been educated in France has brought back all the fine airs and graces, as well as the absurd theories of French philosophy and fools from Rousseau down. He's a milk-sop, a mere fop—"

It was the father's turn now to interrupt. With him Aylesbury was a favourite, partly because of his polished manner and unusual store of knowledge, and partly because the young man brought, as it were, the fresh breezes of Paris into this pent-up, provincial life. He spoke up therefore promptly.

"Stay!" he said. "Aylesbury is no fop. I'll not have him abused."

"Well, I don't abuse him then. I'll only say, what you'll find out for yourself some day, that he is a most dangerous companion for an enthusiastic girl like Grace, and, to speak plainly, all the more dangerous because her future husband, heir to an illustrious name though he is, is as coarse as a country bumpkin."

"I—I never thought of that," said the father, hesitatingly. "But Grace is a dutiful child, and would not, I am sure, think of disobedience."

"There is always danger when two young people are thrown together," said the son, sententiously. "But fore-warned is fore-armed. You ought to have no handsome, well-mannered fellows hanging about here."

"It can't be. She'd never love a rebel," said the father. "She is an Agincourt, and they have always been loyal."

"Perhaps you are right, but Grace is very sympathetic, you know, and Aylesbury is both handsome and plausible. On every account, therefore, he ought to be forbidden the house."

"Forbidden the house! Oh! I could never do that. The son of my oldest friend?"

"Deuce take it, there he comes again. I must confess the fellow rides as I thought nobody brought up in France could. Ha! there is Grace, already, at the door, to welcome him. I wonder if she was on the look-out. Come, confess now that this seems even worse than I had imagined."

CHAPTER II.

Sweet, good night.
This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath,
May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet.

BRYAN was wrong however in his suspicion. Grace had come out for a walk, which she usually took at this hour of the day, but with no expectation of meeting a lover. It was probably different with her guest. Young Aylesbury had ridden over at that particular hour because he knew of this habit of Grace's, and because he wished a tête-à-tête with her on that morning particularly.

But we have notes yet described our heroine. Aylesbury had seen many beautiful women in England, France, and Italy; but he thought he had never seen anyone so lovely as this fresh,

smiling, blushing nymph, bidding him "good morning."

She wore, as was often the fashion then, a quizzed petticoat and over this a sort of sacerdotal mantle with a hood had been thrown over the shoulders, and the hood drawn up over her head. It was a coquettish costume and became Grace especially, for it emphasised the archness and airiness of her usual manner.

But in the simplest garb Grace would have been beautiful. She was tall, but not too tall, willowy, yet rounded in every curve and outline. She carried her head like a queen, and when she walked it was with the free step of young Diana. What shall we say of her face, at once so high-bred, spirited, and womanly? From the dimpled chin and roseboud mouth, from the perfect nose and cheek chiselled like that of an antique statue, up to the level eyebrows and the forehead, broad as Clytie's, it was everything that the most critical could desire. The eyes themselves were of a sapphire blue, shaded by long, curling lashes. The abundant hair was of that rare, rich, chestnut hue which in the sunshine takes the sheen of gold. Her complexion was so delicate that the least emotion sent the colour to her cheek.

"Do not go in," said Aylesbury, as he dismounted and threw the bridle to his groom. "I see you are for a walk. Perhaps you will let me join you. Dick," turning to his servant, "lead the horses up and down the avenue."

If Grace Agincourt was the most beautiful of her sex, Philip Aylesbury was hardly less handsome as a man. As he stood there doffing his hat and bowing almost to the ground, in the elaborate manner of his time, you saw that he was nearly six feet high and admirably proportioned, his figure indicating grace and pliability, as well as strength.

He was attired in a long, embroidered riding-coat, such as was then fashionable at the Court of France; and he wore high horseman's boots, and carried not only the usual rapier at his side but a jaunty riding-whip in his hand.

Grace nodded gaily and held out her hand.

"I was going alone," she said, "for a turn in the woods." Then she glanced at him with sudden shyness, and added, "But you may come if you like."

Grace herself hardly understood that sudden shyness. Was it caused by the something she knew not what in her guest's manner? She felt the blushes rising to her cheek. To conceal her emotion she stopped as soon as they crossed the road to pluck a wild flower in the grass.

Grace had lived to be nineteen, but never yet had known consciously what love was. She had been told almost from childhood that she was to marry her cousin. At first she had accepted this destiny without a thought. Marriage, and especially love, were vague things in the far future; meantime she was young, she was gay, she was happy. Plenty of suitors as she came to womanhood gathered about her in spite of the rumour of her pre-engagement. But she was indifferent to all alike.

She was a girl of an imaginative character, and her ideal, secretly, was high; no one that she saw touched her heart, because no one met its requirements; least of all did her cousin. While others merely amused her, were 'out the mark for her gay railraille, he, after awhile, absolutely repelled her. All this, at first, was his own fault. For he did not even take the trouble to win her; he accepted the marriage as a matter of course; he addressed her rather as a master than as a suitor. To a proud nature like that of Grace this was humiliating. She had never put it to herself in so many words, but it began dimly to dawn on her that her cousin was a tyrant, and a brutal one, and that a wedded life with him would be intolerable to a woman of spirit.

The return of young Aylesbury intensified this growing disgust. The contrast between the graceful manners of the one and the boorish deportment of the other, between refinement, intelligence and culture on one side, and coarseness and ignorance on the other, was a revelation

to the enthusiastic girl. Moreover, Aylesbury's liberal ideas, which her family secretly abhorred as treasonable, had a fascination for her.

"Yes," he said, "I have come to fight in the good cause."

What wonder that Grace, ever ready to be moved by great thoughts, kindled at such impassioned language, and unconsciously looked up to the speaker as a hero. What wonder that before she knew it she loved!

The two were silent until they entered the grove at the foot of the lawn, through which had been cut a labyrinthine path, one of the conceits of that day. Into this they turned as if by the same impulse, for here they would be alone.

For some half-an-hour they talked on common topics. At last Aylesbury said, abruptly:

"I have news. I have got my commission."

"I am so glad."

His countenance fell, and he said, gloomily:

"Then you won't miss me?"

"I—I—didn't mean that," Grace stammered, and her heart began to beat fast. "Of course we shall all be sorry. Gay chevaliers from Paris are not so plentiful, you know."

She raised her eyes to his with an arch look, on to conceal her real emotion. But they met instantly under his earnest gaze.

"Will you miss me?" He took her hand as he spoke. "That is the question." Then he went on, eagerly and passionately. "Oh! darling, you don't know how I love you. Ever since I first saw you I have been torn by two conflicting emotions, on the one side the longing to stay and stay and win your love, and on the other the sense of duty calling me to the aid of my bleeding country. But fate has decided for me. I had, before I saw you, applied for a commission, and it has now come, to-morrow I leave to join General Washington."

Grace was now deathly pale. The look of gay badinage had faded from her eyes. She did not attempt to withdraw her hand. In a moment, as by a flash of lightning, she saw the true state of her heart. She loved this man!

Then she thought of her cousin. She remembered the family compact to which, up to this hour, she had made no open objection. Could she do it now? Would she not be accused, and justly, of coquetry if she did? Moreover, was it not her duty to sacrifice herself rather than obey her father?

She recalled, too, the royalist sentiments of her family. Never, never, she felt, would her father consent to her marriage with Aylesbury.

As she thought of all this she made a faint effort to withdraw her hand and turned away from her lover.

Little did she know that at that very moment her cousin was watching her from the other side of a clump of bushes. Had she seen his scowling, almost demoniacal look she would have realised even more than she did the peril to Aylesbury, to say nothing else, of this unfortunate passion.

Grace had stopped for a moment while her lover had been speaking, but she now moved on. Aylesbury kept at her side, still holding her hand, and thus, though their spy followed, he could not follow close enough without showing himself to overbear what was next said.

"Haven't you a word for me? Oh! be pitiful," cried the lover. "It cannot be that you are really pledged to your cousin."

She had been struggling for strength to speak. Now she said:

"Then you know all. You know I must not listen to you. Oh! why—why did we ever meet?"

"Providence is wiser than we are," he said. "We were destined to meet, and I, at least, to love. Nor will I, can I ever love another. Only a single look, Grace, darling!"

It was the first time he had ever called her by her baptismal name, and every fibre and nerve thrilled as he spoke it. He went on, boldly.

"Our tastes, our sympathies are so alike that it would be a crime in you to marry your cousin, and it would wreck my life for ever."

How was it possible to answer such pleading as this? Grace could not deny the truth of what he said. She was too noble, too womanly for that.

"But—but," she faltered, "even if my cousin were out of the question—"

"Then you don't love him?" cried Aylesbury, rapturously. "You don't love him?"

She raised her eyes to his as in momentary reproach, and still hurried on.

But that look was enough.

"And you love me?"

He would have thrown his arms about her, but she evaded him.

"No, no, I never can be yours," she cried. "Not until my father consents, at least, and that will not be, so long as you are true to your principles, which I pray God you may always be. But," she said, seeing the agony that swept across his face, "I will promise never, never to marry my cousin or anyone else. In death, at least," and she turned and regarded him solemnly, as one might look across a grave into eternity, "we can be one."

"I will wait for you even longer than Jacob waited for Rebecca," said her lover, removing his hat reverentially and looking up to Heaven. "I will do everything but abandon my country—so help me, God!"

As he finished he replaced his hat, raised Grace's hand, kissed it, and let it go.

"Hark!" cried Grace, for she heard the undergrowth stirring close at hand. "Someone is coming. I must go."

With the words she turned and fled towards the house.

CHAPTER III.

Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel: but, being in,
Bear it that the opposer may beware of thee.

GRACE and her lover had just disappeared within the grove when her cousin rode up to the Hall and dismounting, flung his bridle to his groom.

In the door-way he came face to face with Bryan. But before we record the conversation that followed let us try to describe this new guest, so that the reader, in some degree, at least, may realize his appearance and aspect.

Not less than six feet high, heavily rather than gracefully built, and already, though only five-and-twenty, beginning to put on flesh, the cousin and suitor showed, in his slouching gait and mottled complexion, the consequences of the self-indulgent life he had led. Utterly without intellectual resources, for he never read a book; accustomed to think only of himself, for his natural selfishness had been increased by his being rich and an only child; more at home with horses, dogs, and servants, and brutal with all, than with women, or even with the cultivated of his own sex, he was the last person in the world, as her lover already hinted, whom an imaginative girl like Grace could have ever loved. Even her own family would have recognized this fact if he had been a stranger and not a relative.

"Where's Grace?" said the new comer, abruptly. "I see the horse of that fiddle-faddle French dandy here. Is he in yonder with her?"

He pointed with his riding-whip as he spoke to the drawing-room door.

Even Bryan could not help contrasting this coarse, rude nature with Aylesbury's, and not, we may be sure, to the advantage of the cousin.

The air of mastery which the latter put on annoyed even the cynical brother. But he answered, civilly:

"No, she isn't there. She went out with Aylesbury, I think, in the direction of the grove."

An oath broke from the other's lips.

"It's quite time, Bryan," he said, emphatically striking his high horseman's boots with his riding-whip, "that this thing was put a stop to. What business has the fellow here? What the deuce is he sweet on Grace for? I'll have to

teach him his place. And as for her she's an abominable flirt—"

"Look here, Jack," interposed Bryan, "I don't want to be offensive, but I won't have harsh words used about Grace."

His hearer grew red to the roots of his hair, and his hand went down to the hilt of his rapier.

"You needn't do that," said Bryan, coolly. "I won't quarrel with you. But I've had my eyes about me since my return, and I must say that the position in which you find yourself is principally your own fault."

"My own fault!"

He was a little cowed by Bryan's coolness, but nevertheless was choking with rage.

"Yes, your own fault. You have quite forgotten that Grace, like every other girl, prefers to be wood. She doesn't fancy having the handkerchief thrown to her, à la Sultan. Stay! hear me through. My father and I wish for this marriage quite as much as you do. But we did expect that you'd assume something, at least, of the air of a suitor. Meantime there comes along thiscoxcomb—I don't like him, or his French manners, any better than you do—and begins to pay her the thousand little civilities a lady loves. Do you wonder she is pleased?"

"But why the deuce did my uncle allow it?"

Why didn't he turn the fellow out of doors? A mincing Frenchman with a moustache like a Pandour! Why, no honest Christian would wear such a thing."

Bryan restrained a smile with difficulty at this remark. Moustaches, indeed, were not then an English, much less a Virginia custom; but he had seen enough of the world abroad to have outgrown Jack's narrow little provincial notions.

"It was not as easy as you think," the brother answered, calmly, "to turn Aylesbury out of doors. His father, remember, was an old friend, a very old friend of our family. But this is wasting words. I don't think there's any damage done or likely to be; Grace has been too well brought up; all you have to do is to be attentive to her, like other suitors; and the sooner you begin," with significance, "the better."

His hearer stood tapping his boot and sulkily looking on the ground like a chidden school-boy for a moment; then he broke forth:

"They went to the grove you say? Well, I'll go there too. Things will have come to a pretty pass if a Virginia gentleman can't cut out a fool of a French fop."

As he finished he turned and strode off in the direction of the grove.

"I wonder if he is most booby or brute," soliloquised Bryan, as he watched the receding figure. "I could almost find it in my heart to pity Grace if it wasn't that the match is imperative, now that I've dipped the estate so deeply in London. What will my father say when he knows all?"

Meantime, as we have seen, the other had reached the grove and been a witness to the parting of Grace and Aylesbury. He had intended to join the former as soon as he saw her, but he arrived just as Aylesbury took her hand, and so he shrank back and concealed himself.

Grace had just emerged from the grove when she heard voices behind her—one low, the other angry. At the same time she recognised her cousin's horse, which his groom was leading up and down on the gravelled road in front of the terrace.

"It is Jack's voice," she cried, stopping suddenly and looking back affrighted. "Oh, if he should pick a quarrel!"

She put her hand on her heart as if to stop its quick throbbing. Suddenly there was the rattle of steel, as of rapiers rapidly crossed in fight. With a shriek she turned and flew back.

Her cousin, on his part, had emerged from the thicket as soon as he saw that Grace was out of sight and advanced on Aylesbury.

"You insolent traitor," he cried. "I'll teach you to insult the girl I'm going to marry."

"Insult her?" said Aylesbury, in amazement.

"Yes, didn't I see you? Didn't I hear you

coax her to throw me over? By the Lord, such a sneak, were he twenty times an Aylesbury, deserves only to be treated as I would treat one of my slaves."

As he spoke he lifted his riding-whip as if he was about to strike.

Aylesbury sprang back, raising his hand warningly. He knew that a collision with this angry boor was to be avoided, if possible.

"Stop," he said. "You have used words, sir, which an Aylesbury could never forgive, if it was not that a lady's name is, at present, involved in the affair. For that reason I overlook them. At any other time and place—a pretence can easily be found—I shall be ready to answer you in any way you wish."

"Coward as well as sneak," was the contemptuous answer.

And the other advanced, his whip still raised, threateningly.

"I warn you, I warn you," replied Aylesbury, retreating, but using the same low tone, hardly above a whisper. "And for Heaven's sake, don't speak so loud. Miss Agincourt may still be in hearing."

"You treacherous scoundrel, how dare you speak her name?" The voice was louder and angrier than ever. "I'll whip you as I would a hound."

And he pressed on.

Aylesbury, watching his adversary, retreated for a dozen paces or so. Then, finding himself near the turn of the path from which he knew Grace could see them if she looked back, he stopped, and lifting the scabbard of his rapier, and stooping to avoid the blow, he sent the riding-whip with a dexterous twist flying into the air. The next moment he stood erect, barring the path to his rival.

The latter at this disgraceful check, drew his rapier and rushed on, wild with rage.

"If you will have it," said Aylesbury, drawing in return. "But, God be my witness, this quarrel is not of my seeking."

It was the clash of the steel thus crossing that Grace had heard, and that brought her in an other instant on the scene.

Notwithstanding what Aylesbury had just said, he had no intention of taking his adversary's life. He had put himself strictly on the defensive. Trained as a fencer by the best masters of Europe, he had no doubt that he was more skilful than his opponent, and his design was to seize a favourable moment and disarm the latter. But brutish strength and the impetuosity of passion made up, in part, for his rival's inferior science. The angry cousin came rushing on like a mad bull about to bear everything down before him, but yet with sufficient caution not to expose any weak point to his enemy.

Aylesbury was forced to give way for a step, but he parried each rapid assault as he retreated with a skill that would have brought forth applause even from his old master.

At last he saw his chance, and just as Grace entered on the scene availed himself of it.

His rival had made a lunge that laid himself open, if it failed, to Aylesbury; but the latter intended by a dexterous turn to avoid the thrust and to disarm the other. But at that instant Grace appeared, crying to the combatants to forbear. Aylesbury was startled, and for the moment disconcerted; his foot slipped; and though he succeeded in turning aside the rapier of his antagonist, his own went straight on, passing through the body of the cousin, who fell like a log, heavily to the ground.

"Good God! what have I done?" cried Aylesbury, staggering back as he withdrew his blade, now red with the blood of his antagonist.

Grace, for one moment, forgot everything except that she was a woman and that a man was dying at her feet. She flung herself down at the side of her wounded cousin and was already supporting his head in her arms. At Aylesbury's words she looked up and realised, as if all at once, that he was there. She knew, of course, that in the quarrel her cousin must have been the most to blame. His passionate character, the angry tones she had overheard assured

ner of this. But she had believed that no provocation would have induced her lover to fight.

She felt that if he was what she thought he was he would avoid a duel, if only to protect her own name. She did not know the extremities to which he had been driven. She could not believe it possible that even her cousin would have been as insolent and insane as he had been. She looked up, therefore, at Aylesbury with eyes full of passionate grief and reproach.

"Go!" she cried, "you have murdered him: Why do you stop? You have put a grave between us. Never let me see your face again. Go, go!"

(To be Continued.)

SCIENCE.

VEGETATION IN OIL.—Some time ago Herr Von Tieghem noticed in a bottle of olive oil that was often uncorked in a room in which various kinds of mould were being cultivated, several flocks of mycelia, or spawn of fungi partly attached, partly not. He found there were two kinds, one of which could be grown on slices of potato in moist air. Returning to the subject lately, he put into olive oil fragments of stems, roots, or leaves, or whole plants, or seeds saturated with water, and submitted them to a temperature of about 25 deg. C. in an oven. In a few days the pieces were covered with mycelium vegetation, forming a continuous layer of considerable thickness. The spores which had become attached in air were thus vigorously developed in the oil. For this vegetation oil is necessary. The same species of plants inserted in water did not become covered with mycelium. In a vessel half filled with water and half with oil, and containing a piece of stem or root in both liquids, the portion in water remained sterile, while that in oil was covered largely with mycelium. On inverting the piece so that the part formerly in water was in oil, and conversely, the mycelium already developed died, and the previously sterile part grew mycelium. Mycelium flocks detached from the plants and sown in oil developed very slowly, probably because they had too little water at their disposal. No fructification was observed, and the nature of the mycelium could not be determined. These mycelia do not develop in linseed or rapeseed oil. When grown in olive oil and put in either of the others they soon die and disappear.

A SUBSTITUTE FOR JUTE.—In a French journal devoted to textile industry M. Bordier has lately pointed out the advantages derivable from a plant indigenous in South America, and known in France by the name of the fafetone. It abounds in the wild state in France, and in other parts of Europe, especially Italy, where there are several varieties of it. It is an *Asclepias*, with opposite leaves and simple stem, and the flower, composed of two oblong petals enclosing the seed, is crowned with an aigrette of white silky hair. In Italy several attempts have been made to utilise these hairs, but with little success; for it is said they are too short and brittle to be spun and woven alone, and in mixture with other fibres they weaken the stuff. Now, according to M. Bordier, it is not these hairs that should be treated, but the stem—from which an excellent fine white resistant fibre may be obtained capable of replacing silk. M. Bordier says the fibre is superior to that of jute, of which French commerce imports annually, by England, a quantity valued at sixteen to eighteen million francs. The stem of fafetone has the advantage of being incorruptible by water. These important statements by M. Bordier will doubtless be fully tested.

THE ROUNDNESS OF THE EARTH.—In a recent paper to the Helvetic Society of National Science, Professor Dufour, of Morges, calls attention to the deformation of images on large sheets of still water through the roundness of the earth. Instead of appearing equal to the

object, the image is sometimes so compressed in the vertical direction as to be almost unrecognisable. Such is the case with the church-tower of Montreux (on the lake of Geneva) as seen from Morges. One may see the same thing in images of distant ships and their sails, the eye being near the water surface. Professor Dufour had inferred the effect through calculation, but supposed that the Lake of Geneva would never be calm on a large enough surface, till one day Prof. Forel called him to see images which were precisely as he had calculated, and it appears that the days on which the observation can be made (with aid of a telescope especially) are not so rare as one might think. After looking for a moment (M. Dufour says) one perceives the roundness of the earth as distinctly as that of a ball held in the hand.

CONSTANT SOURCES OF ELECTRICITY.—A section suitably cut in a hemispherical crystal with inclined surfaces and placed between two leaves of tin constitutes a condenser which is capable of charging itself when compressed. With this system we may realise a new instrument, a condenser source, which possesses special properties. It may serve as a standard of static electricity for measuring charges and capacities. MM. Jacques and Pierre Curie give, in a memoir on this subject, an absolute measurement of the quantities of electricity liberated by tourmaline and quartz under a given pressure.

PASSENGER BIRDS.—According to a writer in "Nature," the small migratory birds that are unable to perform the flight of 350 miles across the Mediterranean Sea are carried across on the backs of cranes. In the autumn many flocks of cranes may be seen coming from the north with the first cold blast from that quarter, flying low, and uttering a peculiar cry, as if of alarm, as they circle over the cultivated plains. Little birds of every species may be seen flying up to them, while the twittering songs of those already comfortably settled upon their backs may be distinctly heard. But for this kind provision of nature numerous varieties of small birds would become extinct in northern countries, as the cold winters would kill them.

A TRIBE OF TREE DWELLERS.—A French naval doctor, M. Crevaux, has lately made important explorations in the northern parts of South America, more especially in the valley of the Orinoco and its affluents. Among other facts of observation he states that the Guaruninos, at the delta of that river, take refuge in the trees when the delta is inundated. There they make a sort of dwelling with branches and clay. The women light, on a small piece of floor, the fire needed for cooking, and the traveller on the river by night often sees with surprise long rows of flames at a considerable height in the air. The Guaruninos dispose of their dead by hanging them in hammocks in the tops of trees. Dr. Crevaux, in the course of his travels, met with geophagous or earth-eating tribes. The clay, which often serves for their food whole months, seems to be a mixture of oxide of iron and some organic substances. They have recourse to it, more especially in times of scarcity; but, strange to say, there are eager gourmands for the substance, individuals in whom the depraved taste becomes so pronounced that they may be seen tearing pieces of ferruginous clay from huts made of it, and putting them in their mouths.

SPONTANEOUS FORESTS.—A writer in a West Virginia paper combats the opinion held by many arboriculturists that an open country is never converted into a forest through the operation of natural causes, and, as establishing the fact that such change does sometimes occur, brings forward the case of the Shenandoah Valley. When first settled, about 160 years ago, it was an open prairie-like region covered with tall grass, on which fed herds of deer, elk, buffalo, &c., and having no timber, except on ridgy portions of it; but in consequence of its settlement the annual fires were prevented, and trees sprang up almost as thickly and regularly as if seed had been planted. These forests, having been preserved by the farmers, cover now a large part of the surface with hard wood trees of superior excellence. These facts would

also seem to substantiate the theory that the treeless character of the prairies of the West is due to the annual burning of the grass by the Indians.

COMPRESSED AIR LOCOMOTIVES.—A new form of compressed air locomotive engine, the invention of a Mr. Hardie, has been put to a practical, and, it is said, successful test in New York, on the Second Avenue elevated railroad. The compressed air is stored in four tubular tanks connected with each other by pipes so as virtually to form one large reservoir. It is said that a saving of fifty per cent. is effected on the cost of working a locomotive by the use of the new invention.

AN ANTIDOTE TO SNAKE POISON.—It has been found by M. de Lacerda that permanganate of potash is very efficacious as an antidote to the poison of snakes. He experimented on dogs, injecting one per cent. solution of the substance into the cellular tissue or into the veins, after the poison, and the usual effects of the latter were strikingly obviated. In one series of experiments the poison was allowed time to take some effect before the permanganate solution was injected, the dogs showing dilatation of the pupil, respiratory and cardiac derangements, muscular contractions, etc. Two or three minutes after the antidote was given these troubles disappeared, and after fifteen to twenty-five minutes of some measure of prostration the animal would be able to walk and even run about and recover its normal aspect. The same dose of poison, not counteracted, caused death, more or less rapidly.

CREOSOTE IN PHthisis.—Dr. Reusse was recently asked to give his opinion on the treatment of phthisis by creosote. For the last twelve months he had treated a number of patients with this agent, and 78 per cent. were benefited by it. He did not hesitate to attribute this success to the exclusive use he made of creosote associated with balsam of Tolu, leaving aside the creosoted cod-liver oil or creosoted glycerine which he found was not often absorbed. Balsam of Tolu combines very well with creosote, it is an energetic stimulant, and facilitates expectoration, thus aiding the creosote in exhausting the source of the expectoration. M. Reusse gives the creosote in the form of lozenges containing four grains or drops of Tolu balsam and one of creosote. Four or six of these pastilles to be taken daily. Under the influence of this treatment the strength and the appetite return, consumption stops, the weight increases, and auscultation reveals the arrest and amelioration of the disease.

PREVENTION OF BOILER EXPLOSIONS.—An exhibition was recently made at the Alexandra Palace of an invention recently patented as Wilson's Low Water and Steam Safety Alarm. It is well known that a large majority of boiler explosions arises from carelessness on the part of the stoker in not ascertaining with sufficient frequency the amount of steam pressure on the boiler, or in allowing the boiler to get overheated through an insufficient water supply. Mr. Wilson's patent is calculated to obviate both these dangers by causing an escape of steam to blow a whistle in either case. The low water alarm valve is seated in a horizontal diaphragm and opens downwards, and is formed on a stem or spindle rising through the top of the boiler shell, and having a float attached to its lower end. Thus the valve is kept closed so long as there is sufficient water in the boiler, but opens by the descent of the float when the water falls below the proper level, whereupon steam is admitted to the upper chamber and the whistle sounded. The sentinel safety valve, also seated in the diaphragm, opens upwards, and is loaded by means of a helical spring adjusted by a perforated screw plug, according to the pressure at which it is desired that the valve shall admit steam to the alarm. The chamber has a removable cover for inspection, which may be locked to prevent tampering with the valves. Many prominent members of the engineering profession were present at the experiments, and it was on all hands admitted that the invention was likely to prove very efficient in the prevention of steam boiler explosions.



[SHE MURMURED: "FATHER! FRANK! DEAR FRANK!"]

SCARCELY SINNING.

A NEW NOVEL.

BY A POPULAR AUTHOR.

CHAPTER XXVI.

By earth and hell and heaven
The shroud of souls is riven;
Mind, mind alone
Is light and hope and life and power!
Earth's deepest night—from this blest hour—
The night of mind is gone!

THE good, kindly nuns of the little secluded Valaisian convent had one and all, as the days went on, learned to love the poor, mindless waif whom fate had drifted to their hospitable home. Their feeling was somewhat of that instinctive pity which woman feels for a stricken animal, which throws itself trustingly upon their good offices, and can only thank them by inarticulate sounds and wistful looks. And indeed the stranger girl's gratitude was mainly of this dumb, instinctive kind.

But there were times when it would have seemed that her clouded intellect strove to evince its thankfulness by deeds of service which fell within her limited power, and especially by the ready obedience which the girl rendered to every behest of the lady superior or any of the sisters which she was able to comprehend.

Thus she soon learned to make herself useful at intervals in some of the domestic duties which fall to the lot of a lay sister, and it was noticed that she was deft and graceful in her performance of such offices to a degree hardly to be expected from an imbecile.

One circumstance, however, continued to excite the vivid apprehensions of her kind protectors. Although the girl had greatly improved in strength and good looks during her sojourn in the convent, she was still liable to attacks of un-

consciousness, during which she would lie motionless and insensible for hours and even days.

So the kindly sisters were often in sore trouble concerning "Cécile"—they called the stranger "Cécile" from an idea that her fair face resembled a picture of Saint Cecilia touching the organ keys with flying fingers which hung on the refectory walls.

On a certain occasion, however, after the girl had been some weeks at the convent, a kind of epidemic low fever broke out amongst the inmates. The lady superior, finding that the simple remedies which formed the extent of her pharmacopœia were insufficient to stem the progress of the affection, was reluctantly compelled to summon a practitioner from the neighbouring town.

The doctor came, a pleasant-faced, quiet old gentleman, whose skill soon began to effect what the superior's medicaments were powerless to bring about, and ere long the stricken sisters were on a fair way towards convalescence.

It happened that on his various visits Dr. Ampère encountered Cécile (as we will for the present call her) several times. The poor imbecile interested him greatly from the first. On that occasion he had solicited permission to visit the convent chapel—for he was a bit of an antiquarian and the edifice was both ancient and beautiful—and had found her at the foot of the great crucifix, and the almost saintly expression on the raised face and upcast eyes impressed the old man greatly.

Observing his interest in the waif, the lady superior told what she knew of the girl's story, which did not diminish the doctor's curiosity.

At length at one of his visits, missing Cécile, Dr. Ampère instituted inquiry, and was told that the girl had fallen into the strange, comatose condition to which she succumbed at uncertain intervals.

He listened gravely to the lady superior's words.

"And this poor Cécile has fallen into this state before, holy mother?" he asked.

"Ah, yes, assuredly but too often. Alas, the poor child."

"Can I see her?"

"But yes, assuredly. Would that monsieur could give her relief. But, alas! none can do that now save the good God. Is it not so, monsieur?"

"I cannot tell. The Almighty works through human brains and human hands sometimes," responded the doctor, with sententious and professional gravity. "Let me see her," he added.

The abess led the way along the bare, white-washed corridors until they arrived at Cécile's cell, and pushing the door open invited him to enter.

In the clean but bare room lying upon a low pallet bed lay the waif. The kindly hands of the sisters had undressed her, and she lay motionless as a statue, her golden hair floating around her lovely face like an aureole, and the beams of the sun falling softly on every delicately-moulded feature and bringing out all their beauty.

The doctor gazed at her long and steadily, then took up one of the delicate hands which rested upon the coverlet and placed his forefinger upon the wrist.

After that, with an added interest, he raised the heavy, unconscious head from the pillow with his left hand, while he passed the right quickly and softly over the small, well-formed head.

At one place he stopped, and a look of almost exultant intelligence flashed from his calm, grey eyes.

He pressed the skull slightly at this point.

The result was marvellous.

First the girl gave a slight gasp as if in pain, then look of pleasure came to her face. Her lips moved, and she murmured:

"Father! Frank—dear Frank!"

The lady superior looked on in open-mouthed wonder. But the words brought no meaning to her mind. Not so with Dr. Ampère. He knew something of many languages—English amongst them, and he not only comprehended the words

but knew by the accent that the speaker was an Englishwoman.

"Madame, can you guess the cause of this poor girl's affliction?" he said, turning to his companion with great respect.

"Ah, no, monsieur," responded the lady superior.

"She has by some means sustained a slight fracture of the skull. The contusion is, however, sufficiently severe to press a portion of the bone inward. This presses upon the brain, and upon any cause which sends an extra pressure of blood to the brain she lapses into insensibility."

"Is it truly so, monsieur?"

"Unquestionably."

"And is it possible that this can be mitigated?"

"Also unquestionably."

"Cécile will then regain her faculties?"

"I did not say so. She may have been an imbecile before the accident occurred. I think it most probable that her want of apprehension may have led her into some perilous situation which resulted in the accident."

"Then your skill can do nothing for her, monsieur?" said the superior, with a sigh.

"Again, I did not say so. I can at least so far relieve her that she will no longer be subject to these lapses from consciousness. At least such is my belief."

The lady superior, hearing this, was eager that he should exercise his skill so as to afford her protégée even this measure of relief, and Dr. Ampère took his leave, promising to return on the morrow with his trepanning instruments and a coadjutor.

He was punctual, and found the wanderer in the same comatose state. At the abbess's request she was permitted to be present at the operation, on condition that she should exercise the strictest self-control.

But when the assistant operator opened the flat black case, in which, each reclining on its velvet bed, lay cruel-looking instruments of brightest steel—knife and saw, and pincers and scissors, and grotesquely formed implements for which she had no name—it was only by digging her nails sharply into her soft white palm that Mother Angélique suppressed a cry.

She did suppress it, however, and bore herself bravely through all, presenting with ready hand sponges or napkin or water-bowl at the moment when required.

The doctor took the scissors, and with quick deft hand sheared off the wealth of golden hair, which the superior gathered carefully together, with a sigh. Then surely and quickly incisions were made, and the grotesque-looking implements were brought into action, and—

The white lids raised themselves slowly from the violet eyes, which glanced at the little group around the pallet and then around the cell with an unmixed wonderment and an evident intelligence.

Next the curved red lips moved, and words came from them:

"Where am I? What has happened?"

"Hush, my dear young lady," responded Dr. Ampère, in tolerable English; "you must not talk just yet."

And turning half round to the little table behind him he commenced to pour some liquid from a bottle into a small glass.

"But—but, monsieur—" the girl persisted.

The doctor noted the word with satisfaction. If the young Anglaise could already detect his bad accent in speaking her native tongue it was clear that she was no imbecile.

"You must not talk, mademoiselle," he said, with gentle peremptoriness. "There has been an accident, and you shall know more to-morrow. Now drink this," and he held the glass to her lips.

She looked fixedly for a few moments at his pleasant, capable face, then drank the draught without another word.

The doctor allowed her head to fall back upon the pillow and proceeded with his bandaging and swathing. Ere he had finished his task the closed eyes and regular respiration of his patient

indicated that she had fallen into a natural and healthful slumber.

"That will do bravely," he said, with a sigh of self-gratulation, as he finished. "I think we have succeeded, madame, and I believe your charge is as sound of mind as we are. She will probably sleep for some hours. Have an attendant by her side when she does so, and let her impress the patient with the fact that she must not talk at all until the morning, when I will return."

The good superior, whose eyes were filled with tears of grateful joy, gave the required promise readily, adding that she herself would watch by Cécile's couch, and the doctor took his leave.

His prognostications were fulfilled to the letter. In the earliest hours of the morning the girl awoke, and would fain have received replies to her eager questioning.

When she discovered that la Mère Angélique could not understand English she repeated her many queries in fluent French. But the superior put her finger to her lips, smiled kindly, and merely uttered the one word "To-morrow."

Then she proffered the light nutriment which the doctor had ordered and of which Cécile partook. After this she lay back quietly, with her wondering violet eyes, now fixed upon the superior's face, and now wandering around the cell, until at length they closed and again soft slumber wrapped the girl's senses.

Next morning they managed to keep her tolerably quiet until the arrival of Dr. Ampère.

After a brief examination of his patient's head the doctor rubbed his hands together energetically, crying:

"All goes well. It is only a question of time."

CHAPTER XXVII.

Press on! there's no such word as "fail;"

Press nobly on! the goal is near.

Ascend the mountain! Breast the gale!

Look upward, onward, never fear!

WHEN Frank Leslie had secured the virago to his mind he stepped into the scene of the late feasting in order to ascertain the condition of the revellers. This he found to be exactly as he could have wished. Nara had done her work well, and the whole of the band were so entirely under the influence of the opiate that their slumbers were certain to be continued for some hours.

No time, however, was to be lost. It was not alone that the escape from the cavern must be effected in secrecy. That was, after all, but one step. The first and most important, no doubt, but still only one. Frank was quite aware of the importance of getting a good start likewise. He was conscious that he had no knowledge of the jungle through which their flight must be conducted, and that hampered as he would be with two women and an infant his progress could not be rapid.

Consequently all turned, he considered, on the effects of the opium being tolerably binding. If the robbers slept during the entire night and well on into the next day, doubtless he and his little party would be beyond recapture. Frank, though ignorant of any tracks through the forest and the jungle, would yet be able to steer in a direct line by guiding himself by the stars, and by following such a line he must at length escape the district of the Ghara Tal and reach cultivated land and civilised folk.

He had now his rapid preparations to make, in which he was ably assisted by his dusky coadjutor, Nara.

Food sufficient for several days was collected and packed compactly, water-gourds were filled. Leslie equipped himself with a pair of the most modern and serviceable pistols that he could find amongst the robbers, and then proceeded to their treasury. With Nara's aid he discovered the method of removing the stone which closed this receptacle, and was soon laden with a quantity of the most valuable of the costly gems stored therein, backed by not a few broad gold pieces, some of them of very antique currency.

All being ready, the young man, with Nara

and Mrs. Baldwin, repaired to the entrance to the cave. Here Frank prepared to commence the operation of swinging the tree-bridge across the chasm.

He had brought a long, stout iron bar from one of the inner caves which was well adapted to act as a lever, and from their hiding-place he now produced the small wooden rollers upon which he relied as auxiliaries in helping the movement of the bridge.

All being prepared the young man applied his strength to the lever in a strenuous effort to move the heavy tree-trunk outwards. He had now recovered from the effects of the wounds he had received at the time of his capture, and his muscular power was considerable. But he did not find the result of his exertions commensurate with his efforts. It is true the heavy mass moved. It rolled over the rocky flooring and its outer end overhung the deep chasm, but more than this Frank Leslie could not accomplish.

He called the women to his aid, and they lent their feeble strength to the lever. The clumsy bridge moved a little further outward, but as for any prospect of its crossing the gulf that seemed as far off as ever.

Frank despair sat upon the faces of the women, and even Leslie's countenance betrayed his bitter disappointment.

So far as he and Nara were concerned they had reason for their fear. If this present opportunity slipped past unimproved there was no faintest chance of any such being again presented. Beside this, there could be but little doubt that when the dacoits recovered from their lethargic slumbers they would realise that they had been drugged, even without the testimony of the old woman. Nara's complicity in the plot would be patent, and the shrewdness of the robbers would easily identify Leslie also as concerned in the scheme.

It is needless to add that the results were easy to foresee. There would be furious anger at the trick attempted to be played upon them, and the certain deaths of the Englishman and the Hindoo girl, probably under refinements of torture.

But even with these eventualities before him Frank was not the man to lose his presence of mind. He had all the typical Englishman's coolness in face of danger. Dark as the outlook appeared the young man did not succumb to a dastardly despair, but calmly surveyed his surroundings, to see whether from the "nettle danger" he could not even yet pluck the "flower safety."

What was required to move the inert mass of timber in such-wise as to cause it to span the abyss was clear enough to the young man's mind.

This was that power should be applied on the other side of the chasm so as to draw the end over.

Frank calculated probabilities carefully, and came at length to the conclusion that his own strength applied to a rope would be sufficient (aided by his female coadjutors in the case) to effect the desired purpose.

To this end it was indispensable that he should get across the chasm in order to pull from that side. How to effect this transit was not at first apparent, and the swift minutes flew by while Frank stood there moodily cogitating the matter.

At length his resolve was taken. He carefully selected one of the longest and most even of the "coir"—bark fibre—ropes which lay about. In the end of this he made a rude slip-noose, attached a heavy stone thereto, and giving one end to Nara to hold took the weighted loop and cast it across the chasm in the direction of a stump of wood on the other side, which the robbers had used as a post to wind the rope around when they had swung the bridge across and wished to moor it in position.

Frank's first efforts were unsuccessful, but at length, after repeated endeavours, he succeeded in throwing the loop, lasso-like, over the wooden stake.

Then he rapidly pulled it taut, made the other end fast to the heavy beam of wood, gave his

brief instructions to Nara and Mrs. Baldwin, and proceeded courageously to cross.

This was an enterprise of exceeding peril.

Frank could only hang by his hands from the rope, his body depending therefrom and swaying about over the awful precipice. His progress was necessarily very slow, because one hand required to be deliberately and cautiously advanced a little farther at each movement, and the other one then brought up to it with equal caution and care.

In the vivid twilight of the Eastern night every movement was plainly visible to the two women, who, with rapidly-beating hearts, watched him from the cave.

When he had reached the middle of the rope the spectacle of his body swinging to and fro over the fearful height, sustained only by the frail bark-rose and his own strength of wrist and arm, was too much for Mrs. Baldwin, and with a low but irrepressible groan she sank helpless on the rocky floor and hid her eyes in her hands that she might thus shut out the terrible sight.

But the suspense came to an end at length. Frank reached the opposite ledge, clutched the rocky side with a desperate grasp, and presently stood upright, but breathless, and murmuring his thanks to a protecting Heaven.

He lost no time in taking the next step. Nara fastened the other extremity of the coil rope to the free end of the drawbridge, while she and Mrs. Baldwin bent their feeble strength to the iron lever.

Placing his right foot firmly against the stout stake which was planted in the ground, Frank Leslie tugged at the rope with the energetic strength inspired by the idea that it was for life and liberty and love that he strove.

Presently all had the satisfaction of perceiving that their united efforts were beginning to take effect.

There could be no manner of doubt that the tree-trunk was moving—slowly indeed, almost perceptibly at first, but its motion becoming gradually accelerated, until the greater part of its rude bulk hung over the abyss. Continuing their efforts, they were at length rewarded by finding the bridge firmly in position and spanning the chasm.

Leslie now crossed it to carry over their baggage and Nara's child, and then asked his female companions to join him on the farther side.

Nara, unencumbered by her baby, passed over the plank light and agile as a monkey. But when it came to the turn of Mrs. Baldwin the case was different. The training of the English lady had not been such as to make her strong of heart or reliant of spirit, and now she stood shuddering on the brink in nerveless terror and avowed that it was impossible she could venture upon the narrow unfenced plank.

All Frank's entreaties to her to summon up her courage were useless.

"Leave me to my fate, Mr. Leslie!" she cried, at last, wringing her hands in despair. "I appreciate your disinterestedness, but I cannot do that which you require of me."

It was in vain that the young man spoke of the life that awaited her were she but free—her husband's love and all the brightness and pleasure of the world, contrasted as they were by the misery and humiliation awaiting her at the robbers' hands. Argument and inducement were thrown away—Mrs. Baldwin could not summon up the necessary courage for the momentary risk.

Again she renewed her entreaties that her companions would leave her and make good their own escape.

No such craven thought had place in Frank Leslie's breast. Whatever the consequences to himself he would at least use his every effort to save his fellow captive.

At length a plan occurred to the young man. Taking a couple of pieces of the bark rope of sufficient length to go across the chasm, he gave Nara one end of each in either hand. The Hindoo was of course standing on the forest side of the chasm.

Taking the other ends of the ropes Frank

crossed the bridge and held up one end in each hand.

By this means as he and Nara stood at opposite ends of the bridge the ropes extended from hand to hand formed an extemporaneous balustrade, and holding on to this Mrs. Baldwin managed to cross in safety.

Leslie, standing on the cavern side, now poised the iron bar in his hands and anxiously surveyed the means of passage.

Would it be possible, he thought, by the application of his sole strength to dislodge first one end of the tree-trunk and then the other, and hurl the mass to the bottom of the ravine, thus leaving the robber crew captives in their stronghold and obviating all danger of pursuit?

If he could do this he might easily pass himself by throwing a rope over, which his associates on the farther side could secure.

But Leslie speedily found that this plan was not practicable; although he bent himself over the crowbar in strenuous effort, until the perspiration poured from his brow and his hands were covered with blisters, the stubborn mass refused to budge.

Relinquishing the useless effort, Frank made his way across the plank, and joining his companions he took a rapid observation of the starlit sky above, and then the party plunged into the jungle, directing their course in the direction which, as the young man judged, would most quickly bring them within the range of civilised life.

It was a sore struggle at first, for every foot of forward progress had to be won by toil and pain. Unaccustomed as were all to thread the intricacies of these pathless tracts, each bush and tree presented an adversary to their advance, whose branches impeded their onward way, whose sharp spines tore their thin clothing and wounded their faces and hands.

Nor were these the only troubles which beset the fugitives. Dangers more formidable appeared to multiply on their right hand and on their left as they went on. The roar or growl of tiger, of leopard, or of bear echoed around. The sibilant hiss of serpents which might be harmless or which might be deadly sounded in their ears. The harsh cry of carrion birds of prey rose, piercing and grating, from the trees above. Every step of that nocturnal flight was marked by terror and danger.

But the young Englishman never "bated a jot of heart or hope" as he plodded on. Casting anxious glances ahead, to the right, to the left, Frank Leslie, grasping a pistol firmly in his right hand, had ever a cheering word for each of his weaker companions for whom it seemed necessary, or a helping hand to aid them when their footsteps stumbled. At times he would sustain Nara's little copper-coloured child on his left arm and thus enabled the wayworn mother to gain strength for further efforts.

Hour after hour the party had plodded on with dogged determination until, just as the upper edge of the sun was rising above the horizon and casting his level beams between the rough tree-trunks and through the matted foliage, they came upon a rather more open spot, which Frank considered offered many advantages as a place of encampment.

It was a circular space of short grass, of perhaps a hundred yards in diameter, upon which no tree was found.

In such a position neither wild beast nor wilder man could attack them unawares, and the short herbage would afford no harbourage for stealthy reptiles.

Here, then, Frank made his companions seat themselves, while from the stores which they had brought with them he furnished forth a light but sufficient meal.

Then the women settled themselves on the short, soft turf and slept the sleep of fatigue, while Leslie kept watch and ward.

At the expiration of a couple of hours the young man awakened his companions; their circumstances were too full of peril to admit of more lengthened delay.

For hours they held on their way, sheltered from the ardent rays of the sun by the dense foliage of the forest. As he had steered his way

by the stars at night so now Frank had to take the sun as his guide and pilot. Paths or roads there were none in that tangled wilderness.

A second and somewhat fuller meal and a more prolonged rest took place soon after mid-day.

It was of course impossible to estimate what progress they had made, but Frank considered that it had been satisfactory. They had doubtless put at least a score of miles between themselves and the robber-hold, that is to say, if their progress had been direct.

This the young man was tolerably certain that it had been. He was well aware of the tendency which the lonely traveller on prairie or in forest has to move in a circle instead of in a direct line.

But Frank was well assured that his knowledge of the starlit sky had served him well and had at least preserved him from that fatal error.

Again he aroused his travelling companions, and once more they pursued their course.

Another and a longer halt at nightfall, and then the route was followed under the starry heavens.

By this time Frank saw, with a sensation akin to dismay, that fatigue was telling terribly upon his companions, especially Mrs. Baldwin. Unused to prolonged exertions in that tropical climate, the engineer's wife began to show unequivocal symptoms of overmastering weariness. Even the more lithe and enduring Hindoo complained.

What was to be done? True, a considerable distance had been traversed since the refugees had escaped from the robber cave, but was it sufficient for safety?

Leslie did not think so.

He knew well the vigour and endurance of these wild men. He was well aware that they could travel in a space of time astoundingly short over the weary way which had occupied him and his weak companions so long. The time had now arrived when doubtless the effects of the opiate administered to the dacoits would have passed off, and without doubt they either already were or very shortly would be in full pursuit.

Of course, let them scatter their forces as they might there were many chances that in that trackless wilderness some of the pursuers might strike upon the route taken by the fugitives until the latter were already beyond the risk of recapture.

(To be Continued.)

DEAD LEAVES AND THEIR USES.

We very naturally admire growing leaves, and cannot help a feeling of sadness when they wither and fall. A casual look at the fallen leaves gives us the idea that their work is done, and that therefore He who had so wonderfully created them permitted them to decay. But those who give more than a passing look find that, though their ornamental life is over, their useful life is but beginning. You pause perhaps, and for a moment wonder how dead leaves are utilised; but so many varieties are used that it would be impossible to name them all, so we will only refer to the most common. Of these it is only fair to state that many of them are not allowed to wither on the tree, the reason being to preserve a large amount of the essence of the leaf. For example, the leaves of the tea plant are allowed to grow to a certain stage, and are then gathered and dried quickly in the sun. Of course, everyone knows that the death of a leaf is usually caused by the drying up of the sap, on which it depends for nourishment; so that, by forcing the leaves to die more quickly than they naturally would, more of the taste or essence of the leaf is retained. And so dead tea leaves are of use to provide Dr. Johnson's favourite different kinds of tea, but they are not under our consideration; sufficient is it if you consider that most common of all commodities is simply dead leaves.

Next, let us take tobacco, as being an article in common use. This plant is a native of

America, and is supposed to have been first brought to England by Sir Walter Raleigh, who taught his countrymen to smoke it. The leaves only are used, and great care is taken in its cultivation to bring these to perfection, and the drying and preparing for use are a long and difficult process; but no one looking at a cigar or the usual tobacco can for a moment doubt its being anything but dead leaves.

It would be a long and difficult task to name all the dead leaves which are used by herbalists and doctors; but many of the more simple kinds of the class of leaves known as herbs are of great use in cookery, such as thyme, mint, sage, etc.

Having mentioned these individual leaves, you will probably say these are very few, not a hundredth part of the leaves there are, and granting them to be a hundredth part, what becomes of the ninety-nine kinds left? Many leaves are allowed to drop off the trees and decay to a certain extent, and are then used for manure to enrich the ground, that it may bring forth more leaves, which all in their turn will also decay. Then, again, it is an acknowledged fact that the decayed vegetation of centuries—in fact, whole forests which have died and been replaced—go to form a great proportion of our coal.

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PARROTS, starlings, and jackdaws are not the only birds that "talk." Birds not possessed of active power of melody are usually gifted with varied abilities of articulation. A hooded crow, for instance, can produce an astonishing variety of complex noises from his throat, and his talents only lack cultivation to enable him to give utterance to words, but his natural language is the very reverse of melodious, and cannot, in any sense, be considered as a song. I have known a hooded crow to say "papa" with great correctness, and, what is more remarkable, he invariably applied the name to its proper owner—not the hoodie's papa, but his master's. The starling talks very roughly indeed to his fellows, but he is one of the best mimics we have, imitating the notes of other birds, and even the human voice, with great accuracy. Magpies also can be taught to articulate with a tolerable degree of accuracy.

The mocking bird, too, so well known in some parts of the United States, has no natural melody of his own, but he contrives to copy in a most faithful manner the songs of nearly all his feathered neighbours. Curiously enough, the only cases I have known of talking canaries have occurred in the West of England, but I am not able to draw any conclusions of value from that circumstance. It may be a coincidence, or there may possibly be certain families settled in the west country whose peculiar gift is to imitate with a fair amount of accuracy the various intonations of the human voice.

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the Psalm!" and as this by itself would savour somewhat of habitual irreverence on Poll's part, it is only fair to add that he was very particular at meal times in telling the assembled family to "Say grace first!"

EMBALMING.

THE origin of the practice of embalming is lost in antiquity, and of the many suggestions offered as to the motive for it, the most plausible one, and the one still active, is the desire to preserve from the natural processes of destruction the forms of those specially worthy of honour. Whether or not any views of the immortality of the soul, or of the resurrection of the body, may have originally led to this practice we cannot pretend to discuss here. It is a custom singularly at variance with the operation of natural laws, but quite as obviously in harmony with the natural desires of the bereaved. It has excited but small attention in this country of recent years, though so great a man as William Hunter made strenuous efforts to perfect a system of embalming.

At the present day the Italians are the great proficients in this art, which is mainly practised by professors of anatomy, who endeavour to keep their particular mode a profound secret, and let mystery screen from view the composition of the ingredients used. One element commonly employed is a salt of zinc or arsenic. The objects to be aimed at, in addition to the prime one of the delay or entire prevention of decomposition, are the maintenance of the natural contour and colour, and the smallest possible disturbance of the corpse. The Italian professors embalm without evisceration, injecting their fluids into the aorta, and by their preparations they are able to preserve the features quite unaltered, or rather with all the wrinkles and furrows of age or disease obliterated; the body assumes a pure white colour and in a few hours the hardness of marble, and is then practicably indestructible.

We have not yet heard what method of embalming was employed in the case of General Garfield, but from the fact that the features had changed colour, we presume it was not the Italian, nor one so perfect in its results. The Italians still practise in some cases a process of petrifaction, by which corpses become so hard that they can be submitted to the sculptor's chisel and preserved as articles of furniture or vertu.

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THE ADVANCE OF SCIENCE.

"I'm sure," said Judy's laundress to the Ever-lovely One the other day, "what with them telephones, the 'lectric light, the march of civilisation, and the advance of science, as the sayin' is, I don't know what the world's a-comin' to. Why, ma'am, there's my daughter Maria, why, she tells me as she curlis her hair now with the 'Telegraph'!" Judy.

SOMETHING THAT IS BOUND TO OCCUR.—A dog-collar. Judy.

NICE FOR MAMMA.

CHILD: "Who lives in the house on the right of yours?"

GENTLEMAN: "Mr. Smith."

CHILD: "Is he a fool?"

GENTLEMAN: "Certainly not."

CHILD: "Who lives in the house on the left of yours?"

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GENTLEMAN: "No! Why do you ask?"

CHILD: "Because I heard mamma say you were next door to a fool." Judy.

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ONE must perform sympathise with the efforts of the gallant Commander Cheyne to awaken

public interest in his projects of discovery, and, as we remember one chain is equal to four poles, a fortiori, therefore, it may be presumed that our Cheyne will be equal to one Pole if measures be taken to provide him with adequate funds.

Fun.

MORE QUEER QUERIES.

(By our own queer one.)

DID you ever hear of a jolly-boat being helped along by four roars of laughter?

WOULD it be quite correct to define a wild-beast show as a "roaring trade"?

WHEN your housemaid is cleaning the grates do you call her (n)ob-servant?

WOULD it not be only right, although very anomalous, to say that a traveller in the pen, ink and paper line was a stationary traveller?

SUPPOSING, now, you were asked, should you not declare that the proper "end of a candle" is—to give light?

WOULD it be quite correct to describe a glass of bitter beer as a "Bass relief"?

SHOULD you be inclined to say that the real key to the present Irish agitation is—whiskey?

WHEN you weigh the fish you have caught do you weigh them in their own scales?

WHAT is the best sauce for those folks who are always behind time? Should you say ketch-up?

Judy.

TABLES Home Rulers would like to break up and destroy in Ould Erin, because they see a deal too many of them.—The cons-tables!

Fun.

IMPROVEMENT follows improvement nowadays with lightning rapidity; but there's nothing, after all, beats a long broomstick to get a small boy out of a big barrel.

Fun.

A MAN never feels so lowered as when he is made to relinquish the perpendicular and assume the horizontal.

Fun.

MODERN PRECOCITY.

LITTLE MISS: "If I give you a penny, little girl, what will you do with it?"

LITTLE GIRL: "Go yer 'Tommy Dodd' who pays for a penn'orth of 'ardbake, in course!"

Fun.

UNFORESEEN CONTINGENCIES.

EFFIE: "Why do they leave all their shoes outside?"

MAMMA: "In the East they always uncover their feet on entering holy places."

TOMMY: "Rather awkward for people with buttoned boots."

BILLY: "Who don't carry a button-hook about with them?"

Punch.

A LORD MAYOR'S DREAM.—Knight Mayor.

Punch.

THE BALANCE.—"Strictly Tied Up." By a Novelist. To be followed by "Carefully Let Down." By a Critic.

Punch.

A SWALLOW IN NOVEMBER.—The Lord Mayor's banquet in Guildhall.

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MRS. RAMSBOTHAM wants to know whether the inhabitants of the Fiji Islands are called the Fijits.

Punch.

DISTINGUISHED AMATEURS.—THE MIMIC.

MARY: "What are you thinking of, papa? You're making just the face you always make when you're imitating somebody."

PAPA (who specially prides himself on the versatility of his facial expression): "Somebody? Whom, darling?"

MARY: "Oh, Irving, or Toole, or—or anybody, you know."

Punch.

"I WANT to see you 'ticky," as the fly said to the bald-headed man.

Punch.

THE PANAMA CANAL.—America to Europe: "Cut and run."

Moonshine.

IT is to be proposed in the Court of Common Council, as a delicate compliment to our foreign policy, that the forthcoming Gladstone bust shall not be in marble, but in whacks.

Moonshine.

WHAT did the ground-sell, and where was Lord Bra-born?

Moonshine.

Is not a watchmaker a man that ought to be addressed in a 'clockquill manner? Judy.

CANNOT some famous chess-players play better if they sit in "draughts"? Judy.

UPON what grounds would you feel disposed to eat up one of your most intimate friends if he sat down to breakfast with you?—Upon the grounds of his being a palatable morsel. Judy.

Was the practice of "hough-ing" cattle introduced with the view of abolishing "en-tail"? Judy.

VERB. SAP.

How do you know that some of the very numerous mining companies of the day do not resemble the members of the London Rowing Club?—Well, you know, because, as a matter of fact, they cannot and do not rest upon their oars. Judy.

MR. GLADSTONE'S BUST.—Has he? Well, we thought he would, sooner or later, he was too full of words. Judy.

A PRIZE-FIGHTER has a second, we suppose, because, when he gets knocked out of time, a second will be of great importance.

MANY a bold fellow has been bowled out by the "flowing bowl."

DID you get that girl's picture, Brown? You remember you said you were bound to have it.

"Well, not exactly," replied Brown; "I asked her for it, and she gave me her negative."

A CONTRAST.

THERE was once a gentleman of the name of Wilberforce who distinguished himself by obtaining freedom for others; a woman who was pleased to assume the same name has just earned notoriety by depriving herself of liberty—convicted of perjury. As might be expected, these opposite results have been brought about by very different means: in the former instance the chief agent may be said to have been the Wilber-force of character, in the latter the Wilber-force of circumstances.

Fun.

ON Tuesday, the 25th October, two men were committed for trial for trying to obtain money from a policeman by means of the confidence trick. The result will undoubtedly be a cell for the swindlers.

Fun.

TAKEN IN BY AN OPEN COUNTENANCE.—A sailor being eaten by a shark. Fish, and find out a more open one if you can.

Fun.

"So she refused you, did she?" asked Pingy; "why didn't you press her, my boy?" "Press her!" exclaimed Brown; "she wouldn't let me get near enough for that."

ECONOMY is wealth. A Philadelphia lady who found a baby in a basket on her door-step took the infant to the station-house, but saved the basket to carry home her marketing.

A BOND OF FATE.

A NEW NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"A Winsome Wife," "So Fair Her Face," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

SPOKEN AT LAST.

Wait, and love himself will bring
The drooping flower of knowledge changed to fruit
Of wisdom. Wait! my faith is large in time,
And that which shapes it to some perfect end.

MISS EDMOND made light of her indisposition—laid it to heat, though indeed the day was cool—and then laughed and corrected herself and said that she had not been feeling well all day; forgetful of the fact that she had been boasting only an hour before that she had not felt so well for a long time, and praising the air

and the travelling for having restored her somewhat jaded faculties.

Lady Hester sighed gently. She had given up trying to understand Miss Esmond. Her life was a bondage, poor lady—a gilded one, 'tis true, but one whose fetters she could not break for the sake of the son she was helping, and who had no idea how hardly the welcome wealth was earned.

"I thought it was the letter, my dear," she said presently, after Kathleen had declared herself quite well and was once more sitting at the window, outwardly calm, but with a quivering lip that she could not still and a strange fluttering at her heart.

"The letter?—oh! dear no"—and she tossed it across the table as she spoke. "It is a simple business matter, that is all."

Lady Hester said that it was only a few lines written in a clerky-looking hand, and she did not take it up. If she had she would in all probability have been none the wiser. It contained only a few brief words, which she would hardly have understood.

"It is Chester's business, not mine," she said, quite gaily. "I hope he will come soon. I think perhaps it will expedite our marriage. It has been put off long enough."

"There is no need for any further delay," Lady Hester said. She was beginning to feel now that she should be very glad when Miss Esmond was safely married and her charge over. She felt in a false position. And though the wedding day would bring her handsome salary to an end she had come to feel that poverty and its attendant discomforts would be ease and freedom compared with the curious atmosphere of mystery and anticipation of evil that always seemed to surround the heiress.

Miss Esmond was strangely nervous in these days, so near her wedding. The least thing seemed to startle her, and she would shrink and shiver at the sound of a fresh footstep. She was oddly anxious for news from London too, and especially interested in the doings of Mr. Pemberton and his customers.

Lady Hester remarked on this one day.

"You only know that queer old man through dealing with him, my dear, do you?" she asked.

"That is all," Kathleen replied. "Why?"

"Because you always ask me to inquire for any news of him when I am writing to any of our mutual friends," the old lady replied.

And Miss Esmond laughed and declared that she always liked oddities, and Mr. Pemberton was the very king of them.

"And I am interested in hearing about that poor Mrs. Carmichael too," she said. "Everybody thought me very cruel for thinking of her as I did, but she brought it on herself by the stupid mystery she made about her doings. I hate mysteries."

"Do you, my dear?" Lady Hester said, quietly. "Many people would think that there was a great deal of mystery in your life."

"In mine? Why, I am as open as the day-light," Kathleen Esmond replied, with an air of innocence that might have deceived some people but only made Lady Hester sigh and say no more.

From her heart she pitied the boy, for he was one to her, who was going to fling away his life on Kathleen Esmond. But she had nothing to say which would have any weight with either of them. Chester Dalton was as thoroughly infatuated as a man always is when he falls into the clutches of a designing woman, and Miss Esmond's mind was made up.

Mr. Dalton was the most devoted of lovers, and the day after the arrival of the short letter and Kathleen's sudden fainting fit brought a letter from him enclosing one from Gerard Montague, or at least a part of that gentleman's epistle.

It contained advice which would not have been very palatable for Miss Esmond to read, seeing that it was against her marriage, even at this eleventh hour.

"I don't suppose that anything I can say will

have any effect now," he wrote, "but I honestly wish it would. There is something to be told in Miss Esmond's life, and I don't believe it is anything that a husband would like to hear. However, I'll drop preaching and tell you what news there is. It isn't much, as you know. London is very dull, and there is no one here. Why are you so anxious for news of the Garden House? Is it you who ask it or your fiancée in your name? I think it is the latter. She shall have all there is to tell."

This part of the letter Mr. Dalton did not send to Miss Esmond. He simply said it was "business bosh" and did not trouble her with it. The latter part of the letter caused her much thought:

"I have been to the Garden House several times. As you know, I like Mr. Pemberton very much, and have a great respect for his protégé and adopted daughter, Mrs. Carmichael. I never saw the queer old place look so bright as it does now. I fancy Mrs. Carmichael lives there most of her time. She is more beautiful than ever. Her face has a spirituelle look that it did not wear before her great trouble, and the hair that she had cut (do you remember that time when poor Carmichael went amiss from the Falcons?) has grown again in all its splendour. Pemberton seems to date on her, and it is rumoured that he has made a will leaving her everything. If so she will be a match for any man, if she marry again, as she is almost sure to do, for the old fellow is very rich, there is no doubt of that. I don't think he will keep her long somehow. I fancy Molyneux's love and patience will have their reward, and she will say yes. Mind, this is only fancy at present, but I am as sure he has asked her as if I had been present at the interview. If he do marry her it will be an awful sell for all the women who have been angling after him so long. They might have seen that Molyneux was not the kind of man to be caught by blandishments of any sort. I hope the match will come off with all my heart, for I like him, and if I weren't bound hand and foot by Dan Cupid myself I should have fallen in love with her long ago. Mind, all this is only 'evolved from my own inner consciousness,' as I heard someone say the other day. I have nothing to go upon but the signs of the times, which are sufficiently readable I fancy. By the way, you asked me to find out if anything had been heard of that queer fellow that turned up so suddenly at the Garden House some time since. I don't think Pemberton likes talking about him for some reason or other. I did put the question straight to him what had become of him, and he said the last time he heard from him he was doing well in America. He seemed to me to shirk the subject and Mrs. Carmichael too. Pemberton has a knack of picking up protégés. There was an odd-looking old man there the last time I called, to whom both he and the fair Lilian seemed scrupulously attentive. When is your wedding to come off, dear boy? People are beginning to say it will never be; for my own part I hope—but I have said enough on that subject already. I heard bets offered freely at the Falcon the other day that you would never be married at all. But the birds will bet on anything you know. Anyway, married or single, don't let me go without hearing from you soon, and make my best remembrances to your mother if you are with her. If this reach you when you are with Miss Esmond pray remember me to her and to Lady Hester, to whom I shall have something to say when Mrs. Dalton, junior, no longer requires her."

"Gerard Montague is very impudent," Miss Esmond said to her lover when she saw him. "He means that he hopes you will never marry me, Chester. What makes him so bitter against me?"

"Nothing, my darling, he thinks I am too young and too boyish to marry at all—that is it. There is nothing more. I wonder what he says about Mrs. Carmichael is true."

"Harold Carr Molyneux might have looked higher than a woman of no family—one too who

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"Well, not exactly," replied Brown; "I asked her for it, and she gave me her negative."

A CONTRAST.

THERE was once a gentleman of the name of Wilberforce who distinguished himself by obtaining freedom for others; a woman who was pleased to assume the same name has just earned notoriety by depriving herself of liberty—convicted of perjury. As might be expected, these opposite results have been brought about by very different means: in the former instance the chief agent may be said to have been the Wilber-force of character, in the latter the Wilber-force of circumstances.

Fun.

ON Tuesday, the 25th October, two men were committed for trial for trying to obtain money from a policeman by means of the confidence trick. The result will undoubtedly be a cell for the swindlers.

Fun.

TAKEN IN BY AN OPEN COUNTENANCE.—A sailor being eaten by a shark. Fish, and find out a more open one if you can.

Fun.

"So she refused you, did she?" asked Pingry; "why didn't you press her, my boy?" "Press her!" exclaimed Brown; "she wouldn't let me get near enough for that."

ECONOMY is wealth. A Philadelphia lady who found a baby in a basket on her door-step took the infant to the station-house, but saved the basket to carry home her marketing.

A BOND OF FATE. A NEW NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"A Winsome Wife," "So Fair Her Face," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

SPOKEN AT LAST.

Wait, and love himself will bring
The drooping flower of knowledge changed to fruit
Of wisdom. Wait! my faith is large in time,
And that which shapes it to some perfect end.

MISS ESMOND made light of her indisposition—laid it to heat, though indeed the day was cool—and then laughed and corrected herself and said that she had not been feeling well all day; forgetful of the fact that she had been boasting only an hour before that she had not felt so well for a long time, and praising the air

and the travelling for having restored her somewhat jaded faculties.

Lady Hester sighed gently. She had given up trying to understand Miss Esmond. Her life was a bondage, poor lady—a gilded one, 'tis true, but one whose fetters she could not break for the sake of the son she was helping, and who had no idea how hardly the welcome wealth was earned.

"I thought it was the letter, my dear," she said presently, after Kathleen had declared herself quite well and was once more sitting at the window, outwardly calm, but with a quivering lip that she could not still and a strange fluttering at her heart.

"The letter?—oh! dear no"—and she tossed it across the table as she spoke. "It is a simple business matter, that is all."

Lady Hester saw that it was only a few lines written in a clerical-looking hand, and she did not take it up. If she had she would in all probability have been none the wiser. It contained only a few brief words, which she would hardly have understood.

"It is Chester's business, not mine," she said, quite gaily. "I hope he will come soon. I think perhaps it will expedite our marriage. It has been put off long enough."

"There is no need for any further delay," Lady Hester said. She was beginning to feel now that she should be very glad when Miss Esmond was safely married and her charge over. She felt in a false position. And though the wedding day would bring her handsome salary to an end she had come to feel that poverty and its attendant discomforts would be ease and freedom compared with the curious atmosphere of mystery and anticipation of evil that always seemed to surround the heiress.

Miss Esmond was strangely nervous in these days, so near her wedding. The least thing seemed to startle her, and she would shrink and shiver at the sound of a fresh footstep. She was oddly anxious for news from London too, and especially interested in the doings of Mr. Pemberton and his customers.

Lady Hester remarked on this one day.

"You only know that queer old man through dealing with him, my dear, do you?" she asked.

"That is all," Kathleen replied, "Why?"

"Because you always ask me to inquire for any news of him when I am writing to any of our mutual friends," the old lady replied.

And Miss Esmond laughed and declared that she always liked oddities, and Mr. Pemberton was the very king of them.

"And I am interested in hearing about that poor Mrs. Carmichael too," she said. "Everybody thought me very cruel for thinking of her as I did, but she brought it on herself by the stupid mystery she made about her doings. I hate mysteries."

"Do you, my dear?" Lady Hester said, quietly. "Many people would think that there was a great deal of mystery in your life."

"In mine? Why, I am as open as the day-light," Kathleen Esmond replied, with an air of innocence that might have deceived some people but only made Lady Hester sigh and say no more.

From her heart she pitied the boy, for he was one to her, who was going to fling away his life on Kathleen Esmond. But she had nothing to say which would have any weight with either of them. Chester Dalton was as thoroughly infatuated as a man always is when he falls into the clutches of a designing woman, and Miss Esmond's mind was made up.

Mr. Dalton was the most devoted of lovers, and the day after the arrival of the short letter and Kathleen's sudden fainting fit brought a letter from him enclosing one from Gerard Montague, or at least a part of that gentleman's epistle.

It contained advice which would not have been very palatable for Miss Esmond to read, seeing that it was against her marriage, even at this eleventh hour.

"I don't suppose that anything I can say will

have any effect now," he wrote, "but I honestly wish it would. There is something to be told in Miss Esmond's life, and I don't believe it is anything that a husband would like to hear. However, I'll drop preaching and tell you what news there is. It isn't much, as you know. London is very dull, and there is no one here. Why are you so anxious for news of the Garden House? Is it you who ask it or your fiancee in your name? I think it is the latter. She shall have all there is to tell."

This part of the letter Mr. Dalton did not send to Miss Esmond. He simply said it was "business bosh" and did not trouble her with it. The latter part of the letter caused her much thought:

"I have been to the Garden House several times. As you know, I like Mr. Pemberton very much, and have a great respect for his protégé and adopted daughter, Mrs. Carmichael. I never saw the queer old place look so bright as it does now. I fancy Mrs. Carmichael lives there most of her time. She is more beautiful than ever. Her face has a spirituelle look that it did not wear before her great trouble, and the hair that she had cut (do you remember that time when poor Carmichael went amissing from the Falcons?) has grown again in all its splendour. Pemberton seems to dote on her, and it is rumoured that he has made a will leaving her everything. If so she will be a match for any man, if she marry again, as she is almost sure to do, for the old fellow is very rich, there is no doubt of that. I don't think he will keep her long somehow. I fancy Molyneux's love and patience will have their reward, and she will say yes. Mind, this is only fancy at present, but I am as sure he has asked her as if I had been present at the interview. If he do marry her it will be an awful sell for all the women who have been angling after him so long. They might have seen that Molyneux was not the kind of man to be caught by blandishments of any sort. I hope the match will come off with all my heart, for I like him, and if I weren't bound hand and foot by Dan Cupid myself I should have fallen in love with her long ago. Mind, all this is only 'evolved from my own inner consciousness,' as I heard someone say the other day. I have nothing to go upon but the signs of the times, which are sufficiently readable I fancy. By the way, you asked me to find out if anything had been heard of that queer fellow that turned up so suddenly at the Garden House some time since. I don't think Pemberton likes talking about him for some reason or other. I did put the question straight to him what had become of him, and he said the last time he heard from him he was doing well in America. He seemed to me to shirk the subject and Mrs. Carmichael too. Pemberton has a knack of picking up protégés. There was an odd-looking old man there the last time I called, to whom both he and the fair Lilian seemed scrupulously attentive. When is your wedding to come off, dear boy? People are beginning to say it will never be; for my own part I hope—but I have said enough on that subject already. I heard bets offered freely at the Falcon the other day that you would never be married at all. But the birds will bet on anything you know. Anyway, married or single, don't let me go without hearing from you soon, and make my best remembrances to your mother if you are with her. If this reaches you when you are with Miss Esmond pray remember me to her and to Lady Hester, to whom I shall have something to say when Mrs. Dalton, junior, no longer requires her."

Gerard Montague is very impertinent," Miss Esmond said to her lover when she saw him. "He means that he hopes you will never marry me, Chester. What makes him so bitter against me?"

"Nothing, my darling, he thinks I am too young and too boyish to marry at all—that is it. There is nothing more. I wonder if what he says about Mrs. Carmichael is true."

"Harold Carr Molyneux might have looked higher than a woman of no family—one too who

has been a shopwoman," Kathleen said, somewhat spitefully, with a tinge of recollection of how willing she would have been to become Mrs. Molyneux herself. "Chester, dear, will you do me a favour?"

"Will I not, darling?" the young man said, possessing himself of the hand that lay with unusual listlessness on his charmer's lap. "What is there I would not do for you?"

"Nothing, I verily believe," she replied, with more of feeling than she generally showed him.

Of late he had had to be contented with very meagre caresses and short letters. Miss Esmond's mind had been a little preoccupied.

"I don't want much of you this time."

"Whatever it is you shall have it."

"I want our wedding to be private, Chester. Ah, yes, I know what you are going to say—it is to be private. I know what that means—a small and select circle of friends invited to see the ceremony and taste the breakfast. I mean real privacy, with no one but our two selves and the necessary witnesses. I should feel as if I really belonged to you then, Chester."

"But, my darling, how can we alter what has been arranged?" the young man said, deprecatingly. "My mother would be disappointed, and we could not well find an excuse for such an extraordinary proceeding."

"I don't quite see what excuse is wanted," Miss Esmond said, rather coldly. "Of course if you would rather have our friends to your wedding I will say no more about it."

Mr. Dalton would very much rather. He would have liked his wedding to take place in the most fashionable church in London, and all the great world to be there to look on. He had consented to what he called "nothing of a wedding" to please Kathleen, and now she wanted to do away even with that, and take him for better or worse in secret and silence, as if they were running away with one another and were afraid of being pursued and prevented.

"I should like everything to be as you wish, of course," he said, "but, dear, I am not ashamed of you that we should do differently from anyone else. Maybe you are ashamed of me," he added, with a piteous self-abnegation that touched her in spite of her selfish nature. "I am not worthy of you I know, and—"

For answer she gave him what he craved for like a starving man for food—caresses many and fervent, and declared—Dailah that she was—that he was all she cared for on earth, and that it was her great love for him that prompted her request. She should feel so deeply she said that she would not care to think of anyone seeing her, not even his mother, whom she was prepared to love as a daughter should love a mother. She would like to be married without anyone, not even Lady Hester, knowing the when and where. She wheedled him, poor silly moth, till he would have laid down his life at her feet and thought nothing of the sacrifice.

He promised her that she should have her way, and that they two would slink away like thieves and take each other for life at the altar without telling any of their friends when their wedding was to be.

He knew his mother would be grieved and that everyone would wonder at such a proceeding, and he felt in his inmost heart that what Gerard Montague had said was true—that there was something in the life of the woman he was going to make his wife that would not bear the light let in. And yet for all this she had so bewitched him with her eyes and her soft words and her pretended love that he would have taken her to his heart if she had been proved to him to be the vilest woman that ever stepped.

They had sat together for hours and talked of all her antecedents, as she chose them to be told—of her desolate and uncared-for childhood, and then of the wild life in the far West where her reckless father made his money; and if there were little discrepancies in the narrative that would have struck a more practical man, how

could he think of them with her white arm round his neck and her thrilling voice sounding in his ear as she recounted her hair-breadth escapes and wonderful adventures among the mountains of the wild region beyond Denver city?

CHAPTER XXXV.

AT LAST.

By your faith she shall be true,
Ever true as wives of yore;
And her yes, as said to you,
Shall be yes for evermore.

GERARD MONTAGUE had not guessed wrongly, Harold Carr Molyneux had spoken out what was in his heart at last, and had asked Lilian Carmichael to be his wife. He had fought out the battle with himself and he had been worsted in the conflict; he could not shake off this love that had come upon him suddenly with the first sight of the fair, sweet face, and had never wavered nor changed since that moment.

It was a madness, all his friends told him so, and he knew it himself. But it was a madness that only Lilian by his side, his sweet wife for ever more, could cure. It had mastered his whole life—it had made him a murderer he told himself with shuddering horror. But for him and his wicked silence she would have her husband beside her now to love and protect her. If he had only raised his voice Adrian Carmichael might have been alive and well at this moment. Was it not his duty to care for and protect the widow whom his act had made desolate?

It was a very questionable matter indeed whether any warning from him would have stayed the catastrophe, whether Adrian was not already too near the fatal brink to be stayed anyhow before he was seen by the man who so loved his wife.

Reginald Carr always insisted that it was so, and that Harold's illness, then coming on, had created all the rest. No one would ever know except the would-be successor of the dead man, and all he could do was to atone for his wrongdoing as best he might.

In the first weeks of his moribund self-abasement he would have gone to the police and denounced himself as Adrian's murderer if his cousin had not taken means to prevent him, and when he came to himself a little and went abroad it was with the intention to weigh what he wanted to do thoroughly and argue the matter out with himself.

He came back with renewed life—it is astonishing what a scamper through fresh places will sometimes do for a jaded mind—and presented himself at Marbledean to Genevieve's great delight, looking, as that lively lady declared, "just as he used to."

"A new man, I declare," his cousin said, as he shook him by the hand. "All the fancies blown away, I hope?"

"All but one, Carr."

"The old craving?" asked Mr. Carr, a shadow coming over his bright face, for he and Genevieve had been plotting a visit from a certain young cousin whom they both declared would make the very best possible wife for Harold if he would only forget the "young person" who had entangled him.

This was Mrs. Molyneux's way of talking of Lilian, whom she really believed to be of the shopwoman order, and her husband smiled at her speech. He had seen the lady and knew how far removed she was from anything of the "young person" species.

"Yes, the old craving," Harold replied to his cousin's questioning sentence. "It's no use, Carr, I must have her for my wife or go mad. Is she a witch, I wonder, that I cannot put her image away from me for a single moment sleeping or waking?"

"I fancy she is a very quiet, harmless person," Reginald Carr replied, "but not quite the wife that a Carr Molyneux should choose for all that."

"She would honour a king's choice," was the enthusiastic reply, and Mr. Carr said no more. As matters stood he would inherit the Molyneux property if Harold did not marry, and he thought it bad taste to seem to discourage the notion beyond a certain point.

"He must go his own way," he said to his wife. "He'll marry someone, of course; if he does not get this particular lady your son and heir yonder will never be a bit the better for his estates or fortune."

"Oh, Rex, I never thought of that."

"I don't believe you did—neither do I. But the world will never give us credit for such Christian feeling, wife. When Harold marries we shall be accredited with the severest disappointment and envy. It would be the very best thing for him, it would give him something to think about, and drive away the last trace of his craze."

Lilian, in her retreat at the Garden House, happy, after her own quiet fashion, in her duties and the knowledge that she was of use to the old man who was going down the hill and was not so active as he had been, was calmly unconscious of the mad passion that was making a furnace of Harold Carr Molyneux's heart for her sake. It was Mr. Pemberton who enlightened her and told her his ideas on the subject.

"Mr. Molyneux is looking better," she said one day, aent some remarc her benefactor had made.

"He is not cured yet, my dear."

"Indeed I am sorry to hear it."

She flushed a little as she spoke—somehow Mr. Molyneux's name always did call up the blood to her cheeks. She was vexed with herself for being always so glad to see him, it appeared like disloyalty to Adrian's memory—Adrian, whose life with her seemed so far away now as to be like part of a former existence.

She had nothing of him left, not even her boy, whom his father seemed to have taken with him into the world of shadows, so near had their deaths been together.

"Do you know that you are very beautiful, child?" was Mr. Pemberton's next abrupt question, and Lilian laughed and enhanced her loveliness tenfold by the exhibition of her pearly teeth.

"I don't know that I have ever thought much about it," she said. "I have always had too much to do."

"Did Adrian never tell you so?"

"Never."

"Nor any of your other admirers?"

"I never had any. If anything could have made me fancy myself good-looking it would have been—"

"What?"

"Miss Esmond's assertion to the contrary. She was always trying to depreciate fair people, and I was a remarkable contrast to her in that respect."

"Miss Esmond will come to regret that she ever had any beauty before she dies, I am thinking," Mr. Pemberton said, gravely; and Lilian gave a little shiver as he spoke.

The heiress was almost a tabooed subject between them, they never spoke of her, but Lilian knew full well what shape the Nemesis that was coming upon her former mistress was going to take.

"Did Mr. Molyneux never tell you you were beautiful in those days, child?" Mr. Pemberton asked.

"Mr. Molyneux is a gentleman, and treated me as a lady should be treated," Lilian replied. "He did not speak to me as if I were a servant."

"Forgive me, my dear, I did not mean to insinuate that he ever said a word to you that he should not, but I think you can guess what his admiration of you is. It is not my stock that brings him here so often, Lilian; it is your golden head and bonny eyes, child. Don't you know that?"

"No, no, it cannot be; he has never said a word to me."

"It is not his fault that he has not. I have had hard work to keep him from blurting out what has been patent to me for months. He loves you, child, and he has been faithful and patient for a long time."

"What do you mean, Mr. Pemberton?" Lilian asked, her face all aglow with blushes. "How could anyone be patient as far as I was concerned? I was a wife."

"Yes, but before you were a wife. Nay, listen to me, my dear. I know the whole story and I foresee what is going to happen. Do you remember your first meeting with Mr. Carr Molyneux?"

"Yes," Lilian said, simply. "He saved me from rather a bad fall in the Champs Elysées. I never saw him afterwards till he came to Miss Esmond's one night."

"And saw in you the woman he had been seeking so long. From the first hour in which he saw you he loved you with an enduring love that has never changed. He did not even know your name. You see I know all about it, and he went home that night thinking his heaven was opening for him at last. He was not to know, now should he? that your heart was given to another, and that he would have had only a rejection if he had offered you his hand and fortune then. I think you would have chosen Adrian even if you had known of the richer man's love, would you not?"

"Indeed I should," Lilian said, the tears starting to her eyes. "I loved Adrian, Mr. Pemberton."

"So Mr. Molyneux came to know. He inquired after you when he found you had gone from Winchester Gate, and had a shameful story told him of your having run away to live with a man as his mistress. Nay, never blush, my dear, it is as well to call a spade a spade, and this is what Miss Esmond was not too refined to say of you."

"And people believed it. I know they did."

"Mr. Carr Molyneux did not. He told Miss Esmond to her face, not that she lied—he was a gentleman as you say—but that she was mistaken, and would not hear a word in your disparagement. The story was not true he unhesitatingly said, whatever your motive might have been. He has been your staunch friend throughout. The news of your marriage and the knowledge that you were lost to him, as he deemed for ever, sent him wandering over Europe a dazed, unhappy man. The knowledge of your freedom has brought him here of late, and but for me he would have spoken long since."

"And has he authorised you to speak now?" Lilian asked, in a low tone.

She was all of a tremble at the revelation, and began to understand how blind she had been.

"To a certain extent, yes; and I do it, my dear, because I believe that in Mr. Molyneux you would find a man both amiable and honest. He loves you dearly and—"

"But I am not free," Lilian said, excitedly. "I have not forgotten Adrian. If he can see what I do, as some people think the dead can, what will he think of me, my poor, suffering darling, that I loved so dearly?"

"Much more than he deserved," Mr. Pemberton said to himself.

A loud *oh* only remarked, in a matter-of-fact fashion:

"I should think if he can see you, child, he would be very glad to think you had found such a haven of rest as Harold Carr Molyneux's loving heart. He will make you a good husband, Lilian, and put you in your proper place in the world."

"Ah, I had forgotten his money," she said, in a frightened tone. "No, Mr. Pemberton, I can never marry him, never!"

"Why not? Will his money be an insuperable objection?"

"Oh, yes."

"And why, pray?"

"Because I could never look at the thing in a dispassionate way. I should have no honesty in me if I let him speak of love to me. Send me away, Mr. Pemberton. Let me go away and hide

myself before the temptation comes, lest I could not resist it."

"Child, what need is there to resist it? Accept this man, who I know will ask you—he would have done it months ago but that I told him he would defeat his own ends by too much precipitancy—and you will be placed above *whatever* for ever. You will have a husband who will dote on you and a home where you may do all the good to others that your heart delights in."

"But I can give him nothing. I have nothing to place against all his wealth, which would weigh me down, like the *Lady of Burleigh's* rank and state weighed her down, into my grave."

"But what if you do not go to him empty-handed, my dear? What if you take a dowry with you—should you feel uncomfortable and weighed down then?"

"But I have nothing. That is an imaginary case altogether."

"Not quite. Look here, child; I am not quite the miser that people take me for. The old house is not undermined with cellars all full of gold and gems, but I am a moderately warm man for all that. You are my child now. You have been like a dear daughter to me since Adrian died, and as my daughter you will go from me—when a husband takes you—properly dowried and with the trousseau of a lady."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

EQUALS.

From you fine heaven above us bent
The grand old gardener and his wife
Smile at the strains of long descent.

LILIAN looked at Mr. Pemberton as if she fancied she had not heard him aright.

"I mean it, my dear," he said.

"But I have no claim on you," she said, her voice trembling and her cheek flushing. "I have done nothing."

"You have helped to cheer the life of a very lonely old man, my child. The old house has been a different place since it was brightened by your presence. You have been of more use to me than the cleverest servant could have been had I paid half my income for one. You have saved me more than I shall ever quite know in many little ways. I never knew how much a woman's hand was wanted here till I had you by my side."

"Ah, you say this to make my obligation the lighter," Lilian said, deprecatingly. "I feel as if I had done so little."

"You made me a hundred pounds last week," Mr. Pemberton said, quietly. "I did not tell you the worth of what you did, but I know it for all that. I realised just one hundred pounds more than I should have done over that lace and brocade if it had not passed through your skilful fingers."

"Indeed I am very glad to hear it," Lilian said, simply.

She was always pleased to hear that her handiwork had turned out a success. Mr. Pemberton did not often say much, but when he did it was to the purpose, as it was now.

The lace and brocade he spoke of had been stowed away in an upper room of his house and was of rare value, but it had not found a purchaser, and it was not till Lilian suggested that it should be taken out and looked over that a connoisseur in such things saw it and demanded its price.

To the uninitiated it looked a mass of rags—splendid and glittering rags, it is true, but hopeless tatters for all that. To those in the secret it resolved itself into rich and rare stuffs that had decked royal and noble forms in the palmy days of Venice and Rome—stuff of which the art that had fashioned it was lost, and lace whose pattern and rare workmanship have no equal in these days of go-ahead imitation.

Lilian had been entrusted with the charge of repairing it all and had done her work skilfully

and well. Mr. Pemberton had enjoined secrecy, and she had sat over it in the little upper room—very weary sometimes, but pleased with her handiwork and glad to see it growing under her hands into something of its former beauty.

It was all finished and sold now, and a noble duke with a passion for antiques was boasting that he possessed the finest specimen of Early Italian brocade in England, and exhibiting its perfect pattern and splendid state of preservation to all his friends.

He had no idea that but for a woman's skilful fingers there would have been very little pattern to exhibit, for though the fabric was all there in its entirety it was so old that it almost dropped to pieces when it was touched, till Lilian considered it and suggested what could be done to keep it together.

Her grace the duchess too had some lace that could not be matched in the world (part of the same lucky purchase), and often discoursed to her friends of the utter impossibility of reproducing the stitches of the old Medici Point, utterly unconscious of the fact that her magnificent lace, so perfect in every point, was more like a mass of filthy rags than anything else before it was offered for her inspection.

Lilian was worth a good deal to Mr. Pemberton. In the first place he would not have had her at all if she had not been of use to him. He gathered that she would save him money and trouble in their very first interview. But things had altered since then. She had endeared herself to the lonely old man and his household, till the Garden House would not have been the same without her sweet presence, and she had made Mr. Pemberton understand, for the first time in his life perhaps, what a gentle, loving woman's presence means about a man's house.

He had been very well contented with Andrew and his queer, old-womanish ways till now, for Andrew was a very Caleb Balderstone in his deft contrivances for saving himself trouble and keeping house; but he had grown old and some what out of the humour of having things in the rough, and from the very beginning of his acquaintance with Lilian Carmichael he had come under her influence.

The part of the house in which he lived became more habitable if not cleaner, for both Andrew and his master were very dragons in the matter of cleanliness, and led the charwoman who worked for them "the life of a dog," she was wont to declare in her cups, in which she indulged only when her work at the Garden House was finished for the time. Woe to her if either master or man saw any sign of drink on her while in their employ! They would have nothing but the most scrupulous cleanliness anywhere about the house. No spider was to make a web in the darkest corner of the living rooms; boards were expected to be as white as if they were never trodden on; and grates to shine as though they were never used.

"No matter what grease that clumsy old idiot chose to make." This was the charwoman's complaint when she could get anyone to listen to her.

For all the cleanliness there was no comfort. Andrew had little notion of that, and it was reserved for Lilian to make the old house gay with odd hangings that were thrown aside as useless, and flowers, of which there is always a profusion in London, cheap enough, if people know where to look for them.

Mr. Pemberton had not been well for some little time when Adrian died and Lilian came more into the house, and he appreciated the little comforts and elegancies that she introduced all the more for his weary and languid state of feeling.

She was so careful too. The most precious piece of china or rare, fragile glass was as safe in her hands as if it were resting in its case on a bed of cotton wool, and looked worth far more now that he allowed her, as he did, to arrange and display it when it had to be disinterred from packing cases and litter to be shown to the customers.



["GOD BLESS MY DAUGHTER, HOWEVER SHE DECIDES."]

It had all been done for gratitude and affection. Lilian had learned to love the eccentric old man who had come so suddenly into her lonely life and brightened it for her. And she thought herself amply repaid for all her work in the liberal salary that he paid her.

It was all the same now that she had come into the house to live. The money was put into her hand each payday as usual, and when she remonstrated on the score of having nothing to pay at her lodgings Mr. Pemberton told her drily he never paid anyone more than he or she was worth to him.

And now he had declared he was going to endow her with a fortune and send her out into the world as a lady should go, and Harold Carr Molyneux loved her and had made this cynical old man his confidant!

It was all too wonderful to be true. Lilian thought she must be dreaming. Would it not be like an insult to her dead husband's memory to think of another man so soon? Only twelve months! It was as bad as Hamlet's mother—no, not quite. Her son talked about "a little month," and Adrian had been in his grave a year.

Still it seemed wrong, and she felt herself a very wicked woman for even listening to what Mr. Pemberton told her, all the wickeder for the thrill of pleasure that would mingle with her self-upbraiding whenever she thought of Mr. Carr Molyneux.

That her married life with Adrian had been in some sort a disappointment she would not own even to herself, she loved him and she had done her best to make him happy, that he was not so was the fault of his own selfish nature and his repining after things that had gone from him for ever.

She reproached herself with many a sharp word and discontented look now that he was gone, and fancied if she had been more strong to bear, and more cheerful when the hand of poverty was pressing on them heavily, life would have been easier for him—always for him, no-

thing for herself, and she had done all that a woman could do for a selfish, intensely egotistical and by no means industrious man.

He was at rest now, and she was asked to share the life of a wealthy and handsome man who loved her and would do all that a man might to make her happy. She had no right to take him, he was far above her in the social scale and ought to look for a wife amongst the ladies of his own rank and station.

Lilian had come to be very humble since she worked for her living with her fingers, and scarcely ever lifted her thoughts out of the Garden House and its groove.

"I have no right to take it from you, Mr. Pemberton," she said, gently, after a moment's pause.

"No right, child?"

"No."

"And why not, pray?"

"Because of the good payment you have given me for all I have done, and besides—"

"Besides what?"

"There may be others—relations."

"I have none, not one in all the world. Mine has been a lonely life from the beginning. You and Paul Geldart are the only persons whom I shall care to leave money to when I die. I would rather you two were the better of it than any charity. I have no mind to make a will that directors may dine and chairmen feather their nests, while the real sufferers for whom the money is meant are left out in the cold. I would rather dower my daughter with it. What does she say?"

"I don't know what to say, it is all so sudden, so unexpected. I can hardly believe I am awake and listening to real words. I feel as if Adrian would interpose somehow if I—"

"Ah, that's morbid and fanciful. If poor Adrian could be consulted in the matter I expect he would say that to take Mr. Molyneux would be the very best thing his widow could do. Clear your brain of all such notions as that, and remember I am not talking as Mr. Molyneux's proxy, he gave me no credential to do that—

only, being in the secret, I have let you know. I thought perhaps if the proposal came to you suddenly without any warning your answer would be a hasty 'No,' and things could not be mended afterwards. Think of it, my child, and remember you will go to him no pauper wife when he asks you."

"But suppose he does not ask me at all," said Lilian, with a smile. "Suppose it is all a mistake?"

"I don't make many mistakes," Mr. Pember-ton said.

And then he took her face gently between his hands and kissed her on the forehead.

"God bless my daughter however she decides," he said, gravely, and went hastily out of the room.

"She does not suspect, thank Heaven," he said to himself, as he shut himself into his own room and bent his head on his clasped hands. "She does not know—how should she?—that I have learned to love her as I never thought it was possible I should ever love woman again. And she loves him, or will learn to love him; I have seen it coming, the signs were there long ago and she was not conscious of it herself. He is good and handsome and will make her a good husband, and she—my darling as I thought it might be for a little while—she shall hold her own with the rest of the world in bravery and pin money. My little Lilian that I thought— Bah! I am a doting old fool. Look at your grey hairs, Graham Pember-ton, and be ashamed of yourself."

This was the secret of the promise the master of the Garden House had made to Lilian. He loved her! He, that grey-headed old man whom no one had ever credited with the possession of a heart till it had expanded to Adrian Carmichael and his wife.

He had lived a lonely bachelor existence all his years to lose his heart at last to a woman young enough to be his daughter and many years to spare.

(To be Continued.)



[NANCE SANK BACK EXHAUSTED.]

POOR NANCE.

A SHORT STORY.

(COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.)

CHAPTER I.

EN ROUTE.

"By Jove! It seems to me the best thing we can do is to get out and walk," growled Owen Buccleugh, opening his eyes and gazing languidly across the dimly-lighted first-class compartment of which he and his friend Dalzell enjoyed undisputed possession. "It's an infernal shame these incessant stoppages! Now what wretched hole, I wonder, may this happen to be?"

"Suppose you take the necessary measures in order to ascertain," returned Dalzell, settling himself yet more comfortably beneath his bear-skin rug and drawing his travelling cap well down over his brows. "Personally I am supremely indifferent on the subject—only let me know when we get to York."

It was a dark and starless January night. The sky hung low and leaden over the snow-enveloped world—no moon, no single break in the canopy of cloud beneath which the leafless trees and gaunt, bare hedges glittered ghastly white. The bitter north wind roared and blustered round the telegraph posts; then, as though in derision of the futile resistance offered, died away, moaning, wailing, in strange, ironic fashion among the frozen wires.

"I'll thank you just to close that window!" snapped Dalzell, presently, opening his eyes. "One might as well be in a patent refrigerator. Do you hear, man alive?"

Thus apostrophised, Buccleugh's dark head and broad shoulders executed a cautious retrograde movement through the aperture, and with

the tears in his eyes and a happy blending of blue and red contending for the mastery over his somewhat irregular features he dropped down again in the corner seat he had just vacated and pulled the rugs about him.

"Good Heavens, what a night! Now where do you suppose we are?"

"Don't know, and care less," snarled his taciturn friend. "We've had time enough to reach Van Dieman's land it seems to me. Talk about the mail being express, and stopping at every confounded hamlet in this absurd fashion. I should like to let those addle-headed directors have a little bit of my mind."

"Don't, for the sake of your friends," retorted the other, imperturbably. "Seriously, though, we're not so far out of the world as I imagined. This is Burton Ottery—you remember?—the nearest station for Mostyn's place, within an hour's drive of The Towers."

"What of it?" questioned Dalzell, grimly.

Buccleugh burst into a roar of laughter.

"Nothing, so far as I know. Hang it all! how you do crush a man's endeavours to beguile the tedium of the midnight hour by rational conversation! After that last rebuff I give it up."

"Hang me if I do!" exclaimed his irascible fellow-traveller, springing suddenly to his feet like the lion aroused, and letting down the window with a crash. "I'll know the meaning of this delay or I'm—Here, guard—guard!"

But just at this juncture the train, creaking, jolting lazily, began to move.

It was now Buccleugh's turn to shiver, for a full minute elapsed ere Dalzell drew up the sash and resumed his place.

"Humph! A month's delay in order to set down one solitary passenger—a woman, too. It's a rascally shame."

"I'm with you there. For my part I'd send the women by luggage train, or restrict them to the van, when they'd only just need pitching out. That would be one means of economising time."

After this interchange of brilliant ideas,

affording as it did conclusive proof of congenial sympathy and concurrence of sentiment upon a point of no small moment, the two men, now thoroughly aroused, became more sociably disposed, and drifted into conversation after the manner of their kind.

"Can't say I envy Mostyn the inevitable journeys to and from this place. Fancy being located a full hour's drive from the nearest station!"

"Humph!" grunted Dalzell. "Suppose, then, you would recommend a man to put under the hammer a house that's been in possession of his people for the best part of century, in order that he might settle at Brixton, Hampstead, or some such delightful suburban retreat, where the facilities offered by the Metropolitan might be fully enjoyed. Is that your notion—eh?"

Buccleugh laughed.

"Hardly. I should sooner advise his laying down a line of his own, or starting a private balloon. Mostyn might well afford to indulge in luxuries altogether beyond the reach of ordinary mortals. By Jove! do you know, I consider that fellow the luckiest dog of my acquaintance?"

"Ha! Shouldn't care to subscribe to that article of faith just yet. When a man's committed matrimony, you see, one never knows precisely what turn affairs might be expected to take. Pardon the observation, the bride being some sort of a cousin of yours, I believe."

"Thrice removed, but, let me tell you, Muriel's the sweetest girl that ever breathed. I only hope that fellow will make her half as good a husband as she deserves."

"Why did you not apply personally for the berth? As Benedict you might have ensured your paragon the felicity which under present circumstances I should say is—doubtful."

"Humph! you are happily oblivious of the pecuniary estimate an avaricious government accords the services of her Majesty's captains of the line—whereas Mostyn's rent-roll, on the other hand, has possibly eluded your inspection."

Seriously, however, and despite personal regrets, I think they, both bride and groom, have done admirably. Surely these young people have as fair a chance of happiness as any two human beings of one's acquaintance?"

"No doubt; still one never can foresee how these life-long partnerships will ultimately turn out," Dulzell doggedly persisted. "However, Mostyn's a man who has seen a good deal of the world—he has 'lived' all his time, and as there is no real vice about him he will probably settle down into matrimonial harness without any desperate amount of plunging. From the first, moreover, he will take good care to keep the bit well between his teeth—the bay mare will have no choice but to accommodate her paces to his own."

"She will not find it difficult, Muriel is docile as a kitten. Mark my words, we shall have some jolly times at The Towers."

"For my part I was satisfied with the entertainment in Piccadilly," returned his cynical friend. "There was no man in town knew how to do the thing better than Damian Mostyn. By the way, what of the establishment by the Thames?"

"Oh! broken up, of course, long ago."

"Not so long to my certain knowledge. And what of—her?"

"By Jove! strange that you should ask me that question just now. I should be glad if you could tell me. It so happens that I called in St. John's Wood—it's close to my guvnor's place, you know—an hour or two before I started, in accordance with a note I had from Mostyn, and—well! the bird's flown. That's all I can make out."

"St. John's Wood! What on earth do you mean?"

"She was there, poor little Nance. Mostyn behaved like a gentleman, of course, and placed her comfortably enough with a certain widow of our acquaintance."

"Well?"

"Well!" echoed Buccleugh, with momentary irritation. "I know no further. She was a country girl, I believe, and has probably made for her own kith and kin, not taking kindly to the atmosphere of cities, or, at any rate, of St. John's Wood. She was an innocent, good little thing, awfully devoted and all that."

"Humph! her profile, at any rate, was perfect. I can swear to that, and good Lord, what eyes! Gretchen in the flesh. I made a little sketch of her one day. She's gone off, however, you say?"

"Yes, so they told me; only disappeared it seems last night, though she may put in an appearance again in due course, though I've a notion that she's cut and run. Women are like cats, they make for their old haunts directly they've got the chance. I must drop Mostyn a line, by-the-bye—not that there's anything further to be done. If he takes my advice he'll let the matter rest. You didn't turn up at St. George's, how was that? It was no end of a brilliant affair."

"So I heard; but orange-blossom is distasteful to my olfactory organs, as bride-cake is fatal to my digestive peace. Ergo, on these festive occasions I am usually conspicuous by my absence."

Thus the two men beguiled the tedium of the hour, whilst the engine, snorting like some infuriated monster, tore onward through the night, whistling shrilly now and again, exhaling vapoured clouds, and scattering fire along its winding way.

Whilst she—the woman, you remember, who was accountable for several minutes' "confounded delay"—stood still upon the primitive gravelled platform on the very spot where she first alighted, staring vacantly out into the starless gloom, through which the resistless iron mammoth had disappeared in one short breathing space.

Before, behind, on either side she glances, like one who fears her timorous steps may miss the rightful way; anon the solitary porter lounges sleepily towards her, then swift as barbed arrow from the bow out through the open gateway the slender figure darts.

Away, away, adown the lane, betwixt the leafless hedgerows. Fleet of foot as mountain roe or hunted hare hard pressed, across the pathless, glittering snow, despite of silence, night and gloom, panting, breathless, on she speeds, nor questions surely "whither?"

Even so the swallow on the wing, unerring in his flight, cleaves infinite, measureless space—homeward bound through trackless ether, he nor pauses nor considers, but presses on with straining pinions forward to the goal.

CHAPTER II.

HOME.

A COTTAGE'S lonely hut; a patch of garden to the fore, a rick or two behind, whilst on either side a more or less dilapidated shed. A dreary hovel surely this—thus isolated from the haunts of men—even when the noonday sun blazes down from an August sky. To-night, surrounded far as the eye can reach by a thick carpet of untrodden snow, the homestead of Reuben Rorke takes the form of a mere dark blot upon the landscape, disturbing the harmony of frozen, death-like calm and ghostly colour which otherwise prevails. Here, since first he ran alone, Reuben's uneventful days have passed; for sixty years and odd beneath the rafters of that upper chamber hath he nightly laid his head. His father too had lived and died within these same four walls, to which Reuben, when man's estate was reached, in due course brought a wife.

"Twas likewise here the worthy couple reared Nance, their only child, and as the years sped and the days glided in monotonous content away, though it may be the joys of Reuben and Martha, his spouse were few, yet were their troubles assuredly no less far between. Some might have held their fate was hard and pitiable their lot, yet, certes, neither of these simple folks suspected they aught of life's full measure lacked.

Thus all with them went passing well during eighteen years of uneventful matrimony. The "young un" thrived and grew and flourished—at once the sunshine of their home and the sole anxiety these parents cherished. Until one fine day a baronet's son chanced to pass that way. Alas! the old, old story followed—Nance was lost to those who loved her best, "for ever, an' for aye! i' th' next world na less thin this!" Reuben was sternly wont to say.

Not so, however, Martha; "Th' bairn 'ull soon or late coom hoome," she mumbled under her breath—"an' if so be as she sh'd some day stan' a shiverin' afore you doo, ye maunna tell me, Reuben Rorke, as 'ow ye'd daur to turn yer back o' yer own an' only flesh an' bluid?"

"Happ'n that whid I, ye sh'd see—"(thus the old folks wrangled many a winter's night) "this 'ome o' mine's na place for trash. I harbour na man's trumpery!"

But now while the first grey streak of dawn gleamed coldly in the East, round about the cottage reigned a frozen stillness calm as death; no stir of any living thing to mar the trance-like rest in which it seemed sable night still held the new-born infant, day—clasped fondly to her breast.

Until—through the snow with noiseless, lagging steps woman (heavily encumbered) crept with weary, stumbling gait. Across the pathless, dazzling plain unerringly she groped her way—not once paused, nor glanced round, until the cottage door was reached. Then seemingly she had no power even to try the latch; or was it because resolution failed, that for one long moment she stood immobile, leaning up against the lintel for support?—the bundle beneath her mantle still tightly clutched with both thin, trembling hands.

Then a knock—a timid, faltering knock with tender knuckles on the wooden door. "Oh! the hollow, mocking sound! it startles her own ear, and, frenzied, desperate now, with all her force she clamours loud and louder still, again and yet again, upon the unresponsive door. Surely within

the sleepers sleep the sleep of Death! or wrapped in slumber warm and snug are deaf and callous to the cry of the shivering soul without.

At length, in broken, querulous tones, a voice from the casement overhead:

"Wha' cooms roystern' at as weird an hour? We ha' neither kith nor kin—ye canna rightly claim as we sh'd let yer in?"

"Father! father! for the love o' Heaven, open quickly! I perish here without!"

"Wha'! Heaven bless an' save us, Martha! it—it canna be th' wench!"

But Nance it was—none other, who but a few brief moments later sank panting, breathless, utterly exhausted into her father's wooden elbow-chair—which seemed to stand in the wide chimney-corner just where she had seen it last, two long years before!

They kindled a fire, released the bundle from her stiffened arms and laid the sleeping babe to rest; then they chafed her frozen limbs and drew the costly mantle from off the now unconscious girl—old Martha shuddering as she fingered silken skirts and fine-spun linen which represented the price of sin.

Not until morning did they glean the miserable truth:

"He—he'd gone abroad! an' she—she'd coom 'ome again to bide—for gude!"

That was all—neither more nor less could either parent extract from their betrayed and hapless child.

Now Reuben held his peace until the third waned, then, deeming Nance's strength sufficiently recruited (albeit she still sat silent in the chair by the fire-side, clasping the baby to her breast), sternly out spake he:

"Nance, mi gurl, if so be as ye've resigned the ways o' sin, tak' off that silken gown—an' the lining wi' th' fine lace trimmins o' which I heerd yer mother tell. Beneath this honest roof ye'll 'ave no need o' sich like wicked gauds—no 'ome o' mine shall ivar harbour th' trash o' gentlefolk."

In vain the girl, half dazed, protested that as yet other garments had she none.

Reuben would not even temporise, but curtly made reply:

"Put on yer mother's cloathes, mi lass. They are free o' the taint o' sin."

And Nance, choking back the bitter, rising sob, had yet no choice but to obey; for when the old man spoke thus briefly too well both wife and child had learnt that his mandate brooked no delay. So behold the slender, shapely form, which had been the theme of lordly praise, forthwith encumbered by the clumsy garments of the cotter's portly wife.

Myself, I greatly doubt, indeed, whether deluded Nance, despite the tragic ruin of her life, her spring-tide's utter wreck, had ever endured a sharper pang than at that moment wrung her breast.

"Ye ha' na' cause to greet un, lass!" the old woman mumbled, in consolatory tones, as she assisted at this dreary investiture. "Niver a man i' these 'ere parts 'ull be like to look i' yer puir, shamed face again. Honest folk ha' but little taste for th' gentry's castaway womenkind, so it's small odds whether ye sport fine faythers or these 'ere cloathes o' mine."

It may be that the poor young mother lacked the philosophy of better regulated minds. At any rate, as this comforting theory was pronounced the uncontrollable tears gushed forth anew.

But the bitter cup was not yet full, though the one drop needed to make the measure of Nance's misery complete was added ere night-fall of that day.

When Reuben came in from his work late in the afternoon his eye dwelt approvingly for some long moments upon the altered aspect of the girl.

"Nance," he said, hoarsely, after brief cogitation, "fitch down thine cloathes—the silken skirts an' valvat mantle, the fayther'd hat wi' th' flaunting' ribbon as yer coom'd home 'ere in. Bring th' lot, mi lass. I munn mak' short work wi' yon scoundrel's darning trash. I canna bide that yer mither here sh'd dwell anither blissed night 'neath the roof 'as 'arbours sicht."

Mechanically the girl obeyed. Then, even to old Martha's indescribable dismay, Reuben gathered those dainty garments up into a heterogeneous heap, Nance standing by, white of lip and with straining, wondering eyes.

"No need to tak' 'em from me, father," she pleaded, trembling sore. "I winna wear them, but—happen theer worth a sight of gold. Oh! father, yer mauna handle the good stuff i' that unseemly way."

"Yer i' th' right on it, gurl," responded Reuben, grimly, shouldering his burden. "Th' touch o' sivilike devil's gauds is in no ways fit for fing'rs o' honest folk."

A few moments later a hissing tongue of angry flame leapt up in front of the cottage window, amidst blue wreaths of smoke from a smouldering heap, which Reuben had cleared a space to kindle among the melted snow without.

Oh! then indeed Nance sobbed as though her heart must surely break. Who shall say but that in her ignorance the untutored girl conceived such wanton waste more than equivalent to her own but partially-comprehended crime?

CHAPTER III.

WRATH.

WHEN Reuben entered later and in the dim, uncertain light took up his stand in silence on the hearth, Nance's tears were scarce yet dry; the choking sobs then only hushed.

The old man drew breath more freely now, as one who reflects with satisfaction upon a master-stroke effected. The deep lines which Time's harsh finger had scored about his mouth relaxed something of their wonted rigour as his glance rested with complacency upon the changed aspect of the girl, for Nance sat silent by the hearth, a sorry figure in the gloaming, with listless hands clasped about the babe asleep upon her knee—her bright hair disordered, her small feet crossed, as though the weight of her mother's sobs were well-nigh more than those slender ankles could support—swollen her eyes, dejected her mien, disguised beyond all recognition her lissose, graceful form.

The father complacently reflected that "Th' bairn began to look once agin more th' likes o' a honest wench than a wicked castaway."

But suddenly—and for the first time, perhaps, since Nance's sad home-coming—his eye fell upon a plain gold band encircling the third finger of her slim left hand, just then illumined by the firelight, as it danced and flickered about the cheerless room.

The expression of his whole face changed magically—well-nigh ferocious it became.

"Nance!" he said, hoarsely, his voice choked by passion, "tak' off that lyin' bauble glintin' on yer hand! How daan tu' loiken o' sich as you disgrace th' pledge o' a honest wench's fame! You—as 'ave forfeited yer right to every mortal thing save shame! D'y'e hear me, gurl? tak' off th' ring! Let me no' 'ave cause to speak again."

For one long moment Nance regarded him silent, motionless, a fierce spark glistening into life in her widely-straining eyes; then, like the panther suddenly provoked she sprang lightly to her feet, casting the child with little heed into the elbow-chair behind.

"I tell yer, then, I winna!" through white, closed teeth she hissed, relapsing in the fury of this outburst into the familiar north country patois which she had grown to disuse of late. "Ye talk o' shame!—th' shame be THINE to fling a wench's thrubble so constant i' her face! Th' ring's mi' ain—me put it ther! I'll weear it al' mi' life; I'll tak' it wi' me to the grave; I'll no' part wi' it in death! I winna loose it then, I tell yer!" she almost wildly screamed, as Reuben, advancing, sought to grasp her hand. "Ye maun bang me, ye maun cuss me, ye maun kick me fra' the door, but niver, niver shall ye rob me o' my weddin' ring!"

"Mad, wretch'd girl!" cried Reuben; "dunna dar' to talk to me o' WEDDIN' RINGS!—you, as

is naught, save wicked trash, a scoundrel's trumpery plaything! An' unless so be as ye resign yer unholy, evil ways, I winna harbour ye another night beneath th' roof as 'ave been disgrac'd for th' furst time along o' you. Fling away the lyin' bauble, I tell yer once again!"

Unconsciously perhaps he raised his arm in an attitude of menace. Martha, entering at that moment, rushed between the two with a piteous cry.

"Oh, Reuben! wud yer lift yer hand agin yer own an' only flesh and bluid? The puir wench is dazed an' weak an' scared—ye mauna be unc' hard! Mayhap th' fault lays part wi' me—I brought her into the world. Oh! Reuben, let her hide a wee—reflect on this till morn!"

In compliance with the unconscious pathos of this appeal Rorke's ruthless hand was momentarily stayed, but sternly regarding Nance he bade her understand that this one night was hers only "fur conshideration." If upon the morrow she still proved contumacious, declining to render up the insignia of dishonour, "whathin', she'd ha' na furder choice, but moight tramp wi' bairn an' baggage fra' th' roof o' honest folk."

Nance made no reply, but stood among the deepening shadows like a woman turned to stone, regarding Reuben Rorke with strange intensity of gaze and a wild expression in those humid eyes, which often in the days to come, as the dreary shades of evening fall, the stern, unrelenting father remembered all too vividly and well.

CHAPTER IV.

FLIGHT.

THERE was no moon that night, or, accurately speaking, the slender crescent sailing high cast earth no silver beams. There had been a sudden thaw—the Chalkshire world looked black and drear, denuded of that soft white drapery which had previously enveloped it for long weeks past.

In the cottage all was still. Reuben Rorke slept tranquilly after his long day's toil beside the faithful partner of his griefs and joys. There was no glimmer of light within, not even in that bare, unfurnished attic where one human figure moved with cautious, noiseless steps and outstretched, groping hands.

Surely the habit of a life-time has accustomed her to find her way as easily here at dead of night as at noon of a summer's day; yet—Nance shudders uncontrollably when by chance her rounded shoulder comes in sharp contact with an angle of the damp, whitewashed wall.

The girl has been used to warmly-feathered nests of late—erewhile she nestled on a couch of down beneath a satin quilt.

Across the room once more, to reach the truckle bed, where, breathing softly, the dark-eyed babe lies coiled in dreamless sleep. One moment only Nance bows her head, pressing tremulous lips to that sweet, moist mouth—the miniature presentation of her own.

Ah! 'tis hard to part from him like this! Is he not all which in a wide and cruel world she may yet dare to call her own? Once, twice, thrice the cooling, lingering kisses fall like raindrops on the flower—then a moan, a groan, a smothered sob, and for Nance surely the bitterness of death itself is well-nigh past.

Down the steep stair, which treacherously creaks, a lifted latch—behold! the prisoned bird is free; and something like a spasm of relief—akin indeed to joy—carts through her breast, despite the icy breath of the cold night breeze, which plays wantonly about her limbs and lifts the tumbled masses of her hair.

Then away, away, across the fields, adown the hill beyond, over the dyke and past the hedge. Ah! yes, the course is clear. Onward in spite of mud and slush, and prickly bush and jagged stones; small impediments these in the way of one who speeds madly on from life to death—whose earthly goal is the yawning grave—who is bound from this world to the next.

Ah! now at last she slackens speed, she has

gained the border of the swollen waters, the sluggish, darkling mill-stream.

Ah! how black and leaden it gleams under the starless sky, reflecting the lowering masses of cloud, scudding on through realms of ether—pitiless of human anguish, heedless of paltry human woes. No single twinkling star looks down; no sound on earth, in Heaven no sign. Ah! is she not in truth then terribly alone?

At this thought once, only once, she shudders, poor lost and desolate soul! What if when the golden gate is gained she should VAINLY crave admittance? What if mercy should be denied on high to those who plead in vain for earthly pity?

Well, then, rest, eternal rest and peace beneath those sullen waters, swollen by the melted snows. This much of certain good may e'en be hers, and if for the saintliest of God's elect there be aught beyond, who knows?

Not Nance; her fretted soul just then craved naught save the luxury of repose—repose unbroken by the gnawing anguish of remorse, undisturbed by the pointed finger of scorn, which for long weeks past has made this broken-hearted creature's burden too bitter to be borne. Rest from bitter, contumacious words, an angered father's reproving glance, a mother's dolorous wail. Ah! yes, beneath the placid waters in any case there must be much of certain gain.

One long, lingering glance around in last leave-taking of a cruel world, then a wild, broken cry as Nance discharges the last solemn duty with which she stands self-charged.

From off the slender finger of her cold left hand (cautious still, she gazed right and left) the wretched, trembling sinner draws that meaningless gold band—treacherous pledge of an ephemeral love—in defence of which the misguided victim of man's transient passion is prepared to seek a grave.

She neither thrusts it in her bosom nor casts it to the flood; yet she will not leave it on the finger to which it has been wedded for the past two long years, lest at some future day they might tear it thence, when her right hand, stiff and powerless, shall be non-resistant, ever more coldly clasped in Death's.

To pale, parted lips she raises it; will they cling to that which has been her bane, in one long, last agonised caress? It is mostly thus women cleave to that by which they are undone.

Not so, not so—the ring has gone! It has not floated heavenward, caught by the wild night wind; neither hath it vanished into space, nor fallen noiselessly to ground—the wretched girl has swallowed it, thus effectually disposing of the last lingering remnant of her earthly fears.

So now a cry of triumph scares the sable shadows of night, Nance has gained the victory, the grave holds for her no further terrors; she has surely nothing left to dread even in the tomb!

So a wild parting cry triumphant cleaves the silence and the gloom, a hideous splash, a mocking gurgle, one desperate flutter, then, after this momentary clamour, all again is still.

For Nance forbears to struggle, but sinks gratefully to rest down in the depths that alone may shelter infamy black as hers. Betrayed, deserted, scorned, and shamed, for such what remains save the dishonoured grave, the nameless tomb which their life's course has ensured? Thus only might Nance expiate the fell crime which none condones; what matter that she was undiscriminative, ignorant of right or wrong—unversed in those subtle arguments by which man's right becomes woman's wrong, and all the sophistries of the code administered by self-elected legislators, who adjudicate all such abstruse points of common-law, returning one invariable verdict ever, from which the world recognises no appeal?

The fact remains incontrovertible: Nance suffered herself (like one as fair and frail of old) to be beguiled, deceived, betrayed; may woman more deeply err?

CHAPTER V.

REST.

WHEN morning dawned and Nance was found missing from her place none deemed that evil had befallen her, but Reuben gnashed his teeth, whilst Martha shook her head.

"Th' lass wur' off agin to her wick'd ways—cussed be th' day an' th' luckless hour when fust she see'd th' light!"

But later the old woman's tears fell thick and fast, and when long and loudly she bewailed the loss of her one ewe-lamb, the father reproved her sternly, bidding her roughly "hould her pace, fur sich like trumpery as you bad gurl it wunna meet as honest folks sh'uld greet!" Yet Martha never after raised her head, refusing to be comforted, mourning in truth as though the girl were dead.

But not until the summer came and the treacherous stream was almost dry was her rest disturbed who, after life's brief, fitful fever, in her lonely grave slept well. Then, even the waters proved faithless to her trust, betraying her last secret, disclosing her resting-place.

But there was no ring upon the fleshless hand—no "glintin' bauble," no "pledge o' shame"—or even then relentless Reuben would have torn off "th' golden lie!"

Poor Nance, rest well!—in death victorious—for albeit helpless, rigid, cold, none may rob you of that worthless symbol to preserve which you sought an unhallowed grave.

They buried her beneath a mound unmarked by stone or cross, and a discriminating jury of her country-men returned an open verdict of "Found drowned!" What mattered it to Nance?

In the quiet little village this "sad affair" might perhaps have made more stir, save that by the irony of circumstances (the pastime of grim Fate) it chanced that the very day which saw the mortal remains of Reuben's child consigned to their last resting-place the neighbouring hamlets for miles around received orders to be en fête for that self-same glorious mid-summer noon.

Sir Damian Mostyn brought home his bride to "The Towers," his ancestral home on the Chalkstone estate, and at nightfall the bon-fires kindled on the hills might be seen for half the country round, whilst the village bells rang loudly forth a sonorous peal of welcome to Sir Damian and Lady Muriel. Her bridal torch, Nance's funeral pyre—her wedding chimes the dead girl's requiem! Well! 'tis thus Fate cuts and shuffles the cards, disposing of human destinies! Certes, she hath a merry time of it, 'twere surely bootless for impotent mortals to protest!

What further remains to be told? Little enough from my pen—of old, one infinitely wise inscribed that the living jackass must be ever held of greater moment than the breathless lion. Small need then surely that such as I should add my poor testimony to the fact—moreover when the fearful odds lie betwixt a baronet's blooming bride and a cold and rigid castaway, who can doubt round and about which of this unconscious twain general interest would be likely to centre?

So Nance rested tranquil in her obscure grave, whilst the bells pealed louder and the bon-fires blazed high and ever higher! I know not that Sir Damian, doing the honours for his bride, found a leisure moment to inquire whose the mortal remains being carried to their final rest the bridal cortège had chanced to pass that morning on the hill—or that indeed the suicide's name happened later to transpire.

In any case I question whether remorse need stir his lordly breast; for had this "sad affair" received investigation, public opinion must have confessed that Sir Damian Mostyn had behaved LIKE A GENTLEMAN throughout!

Society, as we know, demands neither more nor less—and surely it must be conceded that society should know best!

I who write, and you who read, are perhaps but little qualified to judge, only—ye who skim these pages—ponder well the fate of Nance!

Seed lightly dropped at times springs up, yielding unexpected blossom—even so I hazard a perhaps presumptuous hope that this pitiful little story may not have been perused utterly in vain!

TWO LOVERS.

A SHORT STORY.

(COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.)

WHY am I engaged to Clyde Halstead? Do I love him? I think so, therefore it is all the same whether I do or not. He is very handsome, this lover of mine, very fascinating, and perhaps I adore beauty all the more because I am a little pale-faced, insignificant creature myself. To be sure I have enormous brown eyes, but they are my only redeeming feature, and the fact that my nose is "tip-tilted" cannot be denied.

We have a certain amount of money, mother and I; there are only us two, so we enjoy ourselves after our own fancy. Just now it has led us for the summer to a breezy little village among the Welsh mountains.

Mr. Halstead has followed us, of course. We have been engaged six months, and are to be married in the autumn.

Mother has never liked him. He is twelve years older than I am, who am eighteen. She says he is attracted by my money, is a blasé man of the world, probably with debts of honour that his wife's money will pay.

But poor mamma is not strong, and her only daughter is very wilful.

"I shall marry Clyde," I say, "for I love him;" so the matter rests.

I am lying in a hammock swung on the shady piazza; presently my Cousin Celestine comes out and takes a vacant chair near me. Mother has invited her to spend several weeks with us, and she has been here a day or two.

Celestine is a thoroughly accomplished woman of twenty-four. Clyde was very much impressed when mamma introduced them; I could see that, though when we were alone he only said:

"How marvellously beautiful your cousin is."

She is dangerously beautiful just now as she leans back in her chair. Her gold-coloured hair is coiled in a thick knot at the back, and ripples all over her head. Her blue lawn dress is not so high at the throat as to conceal the faultless neck, and the sleeves are not so long that the rounded white arm is hidden. One jewel, an almost priceless amethyst, glitters on her perfect hand. Verily, my cousin understands the art of dress.

Presently Clyde comes up the steps and approaches us. It does not occur to me that Celestine has from her window seen him approaching and come downstairs to meet him. I am not easily made jealous; besides, I am not well versed in the arts of a flirt—I learnt some of them later.

I rise from the hammock and seat myself near my cousin. It is not a wise thing to do, for my plain face makes a splendid foil to Celestine's superb beauty. I do not think of this now, however.

"Oh, Mr. Halstead!" she exclaims, "how can you venture out in this heat? I should fear speedy dissolution should I attempt it."

"It would not be wise for you to venture," he returns. "I should hardly have gone myself had I realised how warm it is. I have been arranging for a boat ride to-night, if you two ladies will honour me with your company," for the first time looking at me.

"How good of you!" cries Celestine. "I have been eager for a boat ride ever since I saw that lovely lake. We shall be delighted."

I say nothing. Clyde remarks, carelessly:

"Be sure and be ready by seven, Marjorie."

"Thank you," I reply, guiltily, "I don't care to go."

"How provoking you are, Marjorie," my cousin

says, pettishly. "You said this morning you wanted a boat ride."

"My dear," I reply, coolly, "I have changed my mind, but that does not hinder you from going."

"Certainly not," says Clyde, eagerly. "Marjorie takes whisks sometimes. I have engaged the boat; surely both ladies will not disappoint me?"

Celestine hesitates apparently, and finally laughingly replies:

"Well, if Marjorie won't be jealous I will go."

Even I can see how my lover's face lights up, and I answer, calmly:

"Why should I be jealous, Celestine?"

She flushes slightly, and just then mother calls me, and I leave them.

After tea Clyde and I are in the parlour; Celestine is upstairs getting her hat. Presently Clyde remarks:

"You had better change your mind, Marjorie, and go with us."

I feel instinctively that his words are not sincere, that he would much rather I did not go; so I laugh and say:

"No, I am going to finish a book this evening."

And soon my cousin comes downstairs and they go out together.

After this the flirtation progresses with astonishing rapidity. Everyone in the house is talking of it, and in pure self-defence I accept the attentions offered me by other men. There is a certain spice in flirting with an engaged girl, and I do not lack for devoted cavaliers.

Mr. Halstead does not interfere with me nor with him. Celestine does not mention his name to me, and I never speak to him of her.

Sometimes I wonder just what they intend to do, and if my recreant lover intends to return to his old allegiance in course of time. I am destined to find out.

It has been an excessively warm day. I have wandered out into the woods not far from the house, found a comparatively cool place under the trees, and endeavouring to read have inadvertently fallen asleep. I am awakened by voices on the other side of a group of saplings which hide me from the speakers, and immediately recognise them.

"But, Celestine, my darling, I love you. Don't tell me that my love is hopeless."

"Really, Mr. Halstead," my cousin laughs, musically, "you are too absurd, and considering Marjorie's claims I think you are going too far."

"Never mind Marjorie," he returns. "What can she be to me after having known you? I tell you I love you! Do you understand?" His voice is deep with passion. "Marjorie will forget me in a little while."

I am too angry to be quiet any longer; probably I ought not to have listened at all, but I am human; springing to my feet I walk around the intervening bushes and confront the two. He has taken Celestine's hand in his and is waiting her answer breathlessly.

"Mr. Halstead," I say, and he drops her hand and faces me, "allow me to return your ring. I agree with you; Marjorie will forget that you ever existed in less time than you can imagine."

He is too astonished to speak; the ring drops at his feet. As I turn to leave them Celestine laughs softly.

"What a little tragedy queen it is," she says.

I go up to my mother's room.

"I have broken my engagement," I say, briefly.

While I am telling her about it my cousin enters. Taking my hand, she forcibly detains me as I try to leave the room.

"Let me go!" I cry, passionately. "I hate you!"

"But you won't, after a little," she answers. "Listen; I am going to be married in a few weeks. I knew you were out there in the woods, and knowing Mr. Halstead was going to try his old game I purposely took him where you would overhear his effort. Brother Tom knows him of old. He has heard that I have a little more

money than you, hence the scene under the trees. As for love, he does not care one straw for either of us. The only woman he ever cared for died years ago, a victim to his treachery, I am going away next week and Clyde will surely come to you and ask for forgiveness. I came down here at your mother's request, on purpose to open your eyes to the manner of man you loved. If you choose to take him back you will have the opportunity. As for myself it did not matter. I have flirted all my life and certainly never with a praiseworthy object as now. Some time you will forgive me."

I break from her and go to my own room; I am learning something of the ways of the world. At night a delicately tinted, perfumed note is brought to me. It reads:

"**MY INJURED DARLING**,—Only let me see you, kneel at your feet, beg forgiveness, and explain. "CLYDE."

Bah! It sickens me. I tear the note into fragments and write:

"How dare you address me? Don't presume to write or speak to me again. Henceforth we are strangers. "MARJORIE."

This note, with whatever he has given me, I put in a package and send to him by the chambermaid. Then I go back to mamma and urge her to leave the place at once. She consents. Our maid packs the trunks, and the late train bears us away. I say good bye to Celestine.

"Some day I may thank you for this," I tell her, "but not now."

* * * *

It is my twenty-first birthday, three years and more since I last saw Clyde Halstead. I hear he married a widow several years older than he, and such a life as they lead!

Celestine is married, and I worship her boy. She is a model wife and mother. Such girls sometimes make the best of wives. She says she feels that the good she did during that flirtation counterbalanced a multitude of sins. Oh, well, I have forgiven her, but my heart is bitter toward all men.

Mother and I are living at home in London. It is a bitterly cold day. Mother says:

"You had better have the chaise, Marjorie." But "no," I tell her. "I am tired of riding." And I start out on foot for a shopping tour.

The wind blows a gale, the crossings are very slippery, and hurrying across one street to escape a vehicle I slip and fall, spraining my ankle badly. Speedily the usual crowd gathers. I cannot walk, am nearly fainting with pain and rendered half frantic by the crowd. A gentleman passing in a gig stops to see what the trouble is, recognises me, and instantly I am lifted into his vehicle, and am speeding homeward.

My rescuer is a wealthy bachelor friend of my mother's, a handsome, stately gentleman on the "sunny side of forty." I have never dreamed of him as a possible lover, he is so much older than I.

It is a long, tedious month before I can walk again, and Hugh Cameron is a frequent visitor. He reads to me, plays chess with me, and in many ways helps to make the time pass pleasantly.

At last I am strong again, able to go out; but he still visits at our house, is sometimes my escort, and one day an officious lady friend informs me that it is generally understood that we are engaged. I am angry. I have never thought of him in that way. Besides, have I not vowed again and again that I will never marry?

Next day Mr. Cameron asks me to be his wife and gets an angry refusal.

"Why need you have said this?" I ask, impatiently. "I like you, but not that way. We were having such pleasant times. You might have known we could be nothing but friends."

"How should I know?" he asks, quietly.

"Because I don't love you—never shall," I reply.

"Don't you, little girl?" he says, laughingly.

"Well, you will some time, when you are my wife."

His audacity nearly takes away my breath. "But I tell you I will not be your wife," I repeat.

"You may change your mind, little one," he replies, coolly, and then he leaves me.

How angry I am! As usual, I go to mother and pour out the whole story. Mother says very little. She only remarks:

"Mr. Cameron is a noble man, and would make you an excellent husband. But of course you know your own mind."

I leave her rather more out of humour than before. If she would only scold, or do anything but take matters so quietly, I should like it better. I don't take things quietly myself and it exasperates me when other people do.

For a week I see nothing of Mr. Cameron. Then I learn that he has gone away.

I don't care. I can dance and ride; but I miss him so! He is so different from the society of young men with whom I am surrounded. I discover a thousand excellencies in his mind and character now that he is gone. I do not love him, but I am lonely without him.

One night, six weeks after his departure, his card is handed to me, and I go down to find him waiting for me in the parlour.

"Well, Marjorie," he says, coming forward and taking my hand in his, "have you reconsidered that 'no' of yours?"

What shall I say? I am tired of the world and the life I live in it. I like Mr. Cameron, I respect him. I have missed him sorely, but I do not love him. These thoughts flash through my mind as I stand there. At length I draw my hand away and say this:

"Mr. Cameron, I respect and like you, but I do not love you. Years ago I was engaged to a man whom I thought I loved. I learned that he was deficient in all traits of character that go to make up true manhood. Since then I have never been able to clothe any man in the robes of my ideal lover. Knowing this, if you desire, I will be your wife."

He stoops and kisses my forehead.

"When you love me, my darling, I will take my first kiss from your lips; and, on! my dear one"—his voice trembles a little—"I will make you so happy! I will love you so tenderly that surely some time your heart will answer to mine."

And so we are engaged.

He is a strange man, this Hugh Cameron; few men would care so to win a wife; and I think sometimes as the wedding preparations go on how great his love must be.

We have been married three months, and my husband has never kissed my lips. He is kindness itself. No wish of mine is ungratified. Everything that money can buy is mine, but I am not happy. My husband remembers that I have married without loving him and this stands between us.

He seems to think that expressions of affection on his part would weary me, and every day he is growing dearer to me. It is not possible to see day by day what an unselfish, noble character he is and not love him. But he is strangely proud and he waits for my love, not annoying me meantime with demonstrations of his own.

There comes a day at last when I know that I love him, even as he loves me.

I am sitting at the piano, playing some dreamy old melody. The door is suddenly thrown open, and my French maid, Marie, stands before me, wringing her hands and sobbing.

"Oh, madame, Monsieur Cameron—he is killed—he is dead!"

The room seems to whirl around me, but I command myself.

"Hush your crying, Marie! What do you mean?"

"Oh, madame, I saw him—it was awful!"

"Will you tell me what you saw?" I say, sternly, grasping her arm with a force that frightens her.

"The new mansion—at the corner," she gasps—"a stone—it fell on monsieur as he passed"—her voice sounds far away, the room grows very dark, a voice rings in my ears, "he is killed

—he is dead!"—and I am conscious of nothing more.

"Why, little wife, open your eyes. I am not hurt."

"The well-known voice, and the powerful ammonia which I hate, bring me to my senses speedily. I am lying on the lounge; Hugh is holding my head, while Marie applies the ammonia. I sit up.

"What does it all mean?" I ask.

"Only this," my husband answers. "I was passing the new building at the corner, when a marble window sill fell. I should have been instantly killed, but by a strange Providence at that instant I tripped on a loose brick and fell. The sill missed me by a hand-breadth. Marie supposed when I fell that I was killed, and"—looking severely at her—"without waiting to ascertain, rushed off and frightened you into a fainting fit."

Marie begins to cry.

"Never mind, Marie," I say. "There is no damage done; you may go now."

After she has gone I turn to my husband.

"Hugh, it would have killed me! Oh! my husband, I love you," and I too begin to cry.

A wonderful light leaps into his eyes.

"Marjorie, my darling, is it true?" laying my head on his shoulder. "Look into my eyes, little one, and say it again."

I blush like a girl as I look into the fond eyes gazing into mine and reply:

"I think I have loved you a good while, only Marie was the means of showing me how much."

"At last! My darling, my darling!" his lips meet mine for the first time.

We sit there in the twilight, saying but little, a great peace settling upon us, the bliss unutterable of perfect love filling our hearts.

And so it is now. There is silver in my hair, and my husband's is quite grey, but the love that was revealed to me that day has never grown less.

JOHN LINTON'S WARD:

A MAN'S FIRST LOVE.

A SHORT STORY.

(COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.)

—STEAMER below. Dinner at six."

She had been expecting the news for two days—this particular message every minute of this day; and yet, after all, she found herself in a flutter over it.

There was nothing to do but to wait. Everything else had been done—even the details of the dinner settled days ago.

When the early January twilight fell she went and dressed. It was a pretty, quiet toilet. Jessie Linton had the instinctive taste of a well-bred London girl, and she had spent a good deal of thought on this gown and its accessories. Harry was coming home, and with him the American girl—her father's ward—who was henceforth to make her home with them, and nothing less than a new dress could properly honour the occasion.

She gave a satisfied last glance at her mirror before she ran downstairs. A round-ribbed, supple frame, a rosy, childish face, sweet and peacocky and healthy, and a mass of curling brown hair, somehow tossed into a loose coil on the top of her head. Jessie had that kind of hair that you can do anything with. Coils, or curls, or puffs, just as it happened, and only a hair-pin or two to hold the whole structure—it was the despair of all the other girls.

A carriage drove up, and the Linton doors swung open unchallenged. The two travellers alighted—a tall young man, in as many garments as if he had come from the North Pole, and a small, feminine bundle, who seemed hardly able to move. She had to be almost carried up the steps.

"Glad to see you back, Harry."

Mr. Linton grasped the new-comer's hand in

both his, and then Harry Richardson stooped and kissed Jessie. It was all in a breath; there was no time for any feeling of neglect before he turned to his companion.

"This is Miss Vivian, sir. Take her and take care of her, Jessie. She is nearly perished."

"Papa, I am going to take her straight upstairs. You can make your speech afterward, you know. Papa will make you a speech by-and-bye, Miss Vivian; give you the freedom of the house, and all the rest of it; but you don't want it now, I am sure."

Jessie's quick, kindly fingers removed veil and wrappings. The stranger seemed almost incapable of helping herself. Unrolled, she proved to be a little older than Jessie's self, very pale, with hollow dark eyes and heavy black hair. She cowered down before the grate, shaking as if with ague, and held up her small, transparent hands to the blaze.

"Pardon me," she said, and her very lips seemed to be rigid. "I believe I am nearly frozen."

"You poor thing!" Warm-hearted Jessie stooped and kissed her. "You must have something at once. Coffee? Wine will be the quickest—only—with a sudden remembrance of the temperance question—"perhaps you do not drink wine."

"Yes, please," with the very faintest smile.

Jessie ran away with quick, light feet. Below Harry was telling her father:

"A terrible voyage, sir. It has stormed every day since we left New York, and the cold has been intense. If Miss Vivian had not been the pluckiest young woman that I know I should have wished her anywhere else."

"You are not to dress unless you choose," Jessie was saying, as she held the glass of wine to the blue lips. "I will send up your trunks, and one of the girls shall come and unpack for you; but you are just to make yourself comfortable."

"Thank you," in that soft, languid, musical voice.

Jessie left her. When the door closed, Miss Vivian raised herself and looked about. The air of the luxurious room was like June. Beyond were sleeping and dressing-rooms. She sank back with a sigh of content.

When the dinner-bell rang, half an hour later, Miss Vivian came down alone, and promptly. She paused on the threshold of the brilliant rooms. Voices and laughter came from beyond; it seemed as if all three were talking together. Miss Vivian's pause looked like hesitation; perhaps it was. But it gave her time for one of those comprehensive feminine surveys that take only the flash of an eye. The solid, rich old furniture and the sombre magnificence of carpets and curtains and drapery were brightened by modern touches of pale carved marbles and gleaming crystals and shining mirrors. A small conservatory closed the vista, with no hint of winter in its luxuriant blooms. At right angles a library opened, its wide entrance arch draped with some heavy Persian stuff.

John Linton saw her almost at once, and went to meet her.

"I am not going to make a speech, Miss Vivian—in spite of Jessie's threat—but we are all very glad to have you with us."

Jessie was standing beside Richardson, clinging to his arm, school-girl fashion, and talking with school-girl gaiety. When her father spoke she turned, blushed a little, dropped Harry's arm, and came to her father's side.

"We are very glad," she repeated, with sincere emphasis.

And Miss Vivian said, simply, "Thank you," and they went straight to the dinner-table.

Jessie looked at her with a little surprise. She was not sure whether Miss Vivian had "dressed" or not. She certainly bore small resemblance to the wretched little creature she had unwrapped upstairs a little while ago. She was in deep mourning, and her heavy black dress was artistically guiltless of flounce or fur below. Around her neck a quantity of white illusion softened the contrast between the dead black of her gown and her colourless complexion.

Her hair was smoothly gathered into a Greek knot, low on her head. Nothing could be more simple, and Miss Linton confessed to herself that not many women were more stylish, and she began to be a little afraid of her.

There was not the slightest need. Nothing could have been more simply unaffected than her behaviour at the table. She talked very little, but it was in a quiet, simple, direct way.

"Isn't it a relief to be sure that your plate will not dance into your lap?" Richardson said.

She just answered "Yes," and smiled.

"Miss Vivian is a very good sailor."

"I'm sure I do not know, then, what constitutes a poor sailor. I was so wretchedly miserable all the time that I had very little interest in living or dying."

"She took her daily walk on deck," to Mr. Linton, "when not another lady was out of the cabin."

"I think Miss Vivian stands convicted of good behaviour," in his pleasant, cordial way. "I know of nothing more demoralising than seasickness."

"It is very pleasant to find the instinct of self-preservation praiseworthy, after all. I was quite sure I should die shut up below."

That was every word she said. Jessie sat at the head of the table, and somehow felt left out of it all. She felt like an awkward, overgrown school-girl—over-dressed, too, and that was the worst of all. And then her sweet temper came to the rescue, and she was sure it was all her own fault. She tried to bear her share of the talk, and Miss Vivian did not open her lips again.

Miss Vivian left them very early that evening.

"I am very tired. I am sure you will excuse me," rising. And then to Richardson: "You have so much to ask and tell, I know."

He looked at her. She had a trick of glancing quickly up and then dropping her lids again—a very shy and very charming little performance, only it seems almost too bad to call it a trick, it was so entirely innocent and unconscious. A kind of eager look came into Richardson's face, but Miss Vivian did not see it. How should she with those lowered lids?

Shut into her own rooms, she made her deliberate and luxurious preparations for bed.

"It is all so much, so very much better than I expected," she thought. "If I had known, I should hardly have wasted three years in waiting on Mrs. Vivian. I thought it would be so different here, and I find nothing could be better. Miss Jessie—well, Miss Jessie is not formidable."

Eighteen years ago John Linton had been left a widower, with this tiny girl baby as all that remained to him of two years of quiet married contentment. His wife was not his first love—most men's wives are not—and by-and-bye, when Jessie was three or four years old, he had brought home this boy, a half-dozen years her senior. He had his mother's eyes—the eyes that had once answered love to John Linton's looks. The two children grew up together, and were hardly conscious that their relationship was less than that of brother and sister. Jessie had been her father's housekeeper for the last two years, and Harry had come to be Mr. Linton's right-hand business man.

Three years before, James Vivian, an old college friend, had written John Linton from the home that he had made for himself in America. He was dying, he wrote; by the time that his letter reached its destination his daughter would be left with only her step-mother among comparative strangers. The girl was the daughter of an Englishman; such relatives as she had were on this side the water. He begged Linton to act as her guardian, to take her into his home if possible. Following close on the letter came the news of the writer's death. Linton wrote at once; he surmised that the two ladies did not live quite harmoniously. The reply was a very gracefully-worded note to the effect that Mrs. Vivian's health was uncertain, and the young lady felt it to be her duty to remain with her.

Linton concluded that he had been mistaken. He received and answered two letters a year from Miss Vivian, and so the matter rested.

At last intelligence came of Mrs. Vivian's death. It happened that Harry Richardson was in America on a business trip. He was directed to put himself at the young lady's disposal, and wait her convenience. She delayed him a month, and they came back together through the January storms.

So Miss Vivian found herself at home in the Linton household, and half wondering at the unquestioning and unbounded hospitality of her welcome, still she received it with small token of surprise or even of recognition.

Jessie was a born housewife. Everything in her small domain moved with magical precision. Happy and healthy, with a wonderful gift of activity, every minute was full of work or pleasure. She saw a good deal of society, too, in a quiet way—always under her father's escort.

During the first week of Miss Vivian's stay in the house the relative positions of the two girls seemed to define themselves. It puzzled Miss Linton a little. Her guest never intruded herself. She was perfectly and contentedly quiet; stayed in her own rooms a great deal of the time; hardly made her presence felt in any of their domestic arrangements; and yet somehow Jessie was always conscious of her. Not quite happily, and yet she could not define the discomfort. Nothing could be sweeter or simpler than her manners. Jessie had thought she might find herself nervous about her house-keeping, and she found that Miss Vivian not only did not know but did not pretend to know anything about it. Her toilets—she made toilets, Jessie found—were altogether too simple to account for the length of time they took, and she never was critical—in words at least—of other people's dress. Her deep mourning prevented her accepting the invitations that included her with Jessie. She protested against interfering with any of their ways, and so at last there was no more said about her going. Only she was rarely ever left alone. Mr. Linton had always been Jessie's escort, but now occasionally Harry Richardson took his place. Often, however, it was Harry who stayed at home.

One evening there was to be rather a grand wedding reception. Jessie had talked about it for a week, and her dress had come home three days before. She had ventured on somewhat unusual magnificence—a pale peach silk with a good deal of tulle about it, and a quantity of moonstone jewellery in odd silver settings. Harry had found it somewhere over the water, and Jessie had been reserving it for some grand occasion.

Miss Vivian looked at her after she was dressed without a word. The girl was conscious of a steadily-failing condition of the mental barometer which had marked satisfaction a few minutes before.

"What is it?" she asked.

"Your hair. It is so pretty, and you can do anything with it. It is a pity to spoil your toilet by dressing it that way."

"What shall I do?"

"Will you let me try?"

"Of course I will."

"You see your dress, in the gaslight and in a crowd, will be only a faintly pink, shining cloud. Your hair never was made to be twisted into those stiff braids. It is prettier by night than by day, and that can be said of very few girls' heads. Look."

She had unbound the obnoxious braids while she talked, and had brushed out the shining, waving mass. Then with a dexterous turn or two of her wrists she had gathered it all into a careless knot low on her head.

"It looks as if it were going to fall," anxiously.

"You will see that it won't—not a strand. Wait a minute."

She went to her room. When she came back, over the shining ripples that caught the light of themselves she dusted just the least suspicion of

gold powder, secured the whole soft coil with a crystal arrow, and professed herself satisfied.

"Don't you see, it looks as if you had done it in five minutes. It shows that every bit of it is your own. There isn't probably another girl in your set that dare trust her hair in any such fashion. You can dance all you please, dear; it will neither come off nor down."

Jessie went away with a new idea forming itself in her head.

It was Mr. Linton who had remained at home this evening. Miss Vivian went back to her room and sat down with a book. It lay unfolded in her lap, though, as she sat with an air of listless waiting.

A summons came before very long.

"Mr. Linton is in the library, miss. If you are not especially busy, would you come and play a game of chess with him?"

Miss Vivian rose slowly and went down to the room where her guardian waited. He rose with a smile of genuine pleasure as she came in.

The chess-table was drawn before the grate. The drop-light burned with a suffused radiance. It looked as if there was a long, quiet, pleasant evening before them.

She seated herself in the chair he gave her, but seemed not to be thinking of it. A little air of abstraction had settled over her. Mr. Linton waited, watching her with good-humoured patience. He spoke at last.

"Well, Miss Vivian, I dislike to interrupt a lady's train of reflection, but—"

"Oh, yes, I was thinking," with a little start. "I have something to say, and did not quite know how to begin."

Another pause.

"Well?" suggestively.

"Yes," nervously, and then by a visible effort steady herself. "Of course, Mr. Linton, I know that papa left very little money; that most of that was used during mamma's illness. There cannot possibly be enough left to keep me even dressed as I ought to be, if I remain in your house," with a desperate burst of confidence. She went on again: "I think perhaps you could put me in the way of doing something for myself. I don't quite know what I can do. I haven't much education—at least of the available kind. The best thing for me would be perhaps to find a place as companion with some quiet lady."

She was sitting with her hands clasped in her lap, her eyes on the fire. He did not answer her at once, and she looked up at him, as if surprised at his silence.

He was regarding her with a kind of pitying smile on his lips. Apparently she misunderstood his expression.

"You think it is absurd? I do not understand your English ways very well, perhaps."

"Not that. I hoped you had been happy with us."

"I have been. It has been such a blessed rest before going out to what must inevitably come," with a quiver in her voice.

"I think you are misinformed about your money. It is not a very large fortune, certainly, but it is a good deal more than you ought to spend on your wardrobe, unless you are a very extravagant young lady."

"Which I am not."

"Why not make your home with us? Jessie is as good a girl as one will find anywhere, but she has grown up quite by herself. She has seen very little of the world. In some ways she is wholly unformed. If you were to stay with her—"

"You think me so very worldly-wise, then?" with a little deprecating smile.

The game of chess was begun late, and was prolonged beyond its usual limits. It was deep in the night when Miss Vivian said checkmate, and sat a minute contemplating the scene of her victory.

She put away the pieces in her careful, orderly way. She rose and said good night, and then paused suddenly.

"There is one thing, Mr. Linton, if I consent to stay. I must not be made to feel that any-

one in the house is going out of his or her accustomed way for my sake. Your staying at home to-night—you have denied yourself a pleasant evening on my account."

"My dear Miss Edith," he protested, "I am growing an old man; a quiet evening at home now and then is by no means a hardship."

"I fear few of your friends would excuse you on the plea of old age;" and then with a sudden impulse—and Miss Vivian was not given to impulses—she extended her hand.

"You have been so very, very kind to me."

The tears gathered slowly in her eyes while he held her hand for a minute. Miss Vivian was not given to tears, and her great soft eyes were very beautiful.

It was only a day or two after that Harry Richardson came back to the house in the middle of the morning. It was rather an unusual hour for him to appear, and no one was expecting him. Clearly, Miss Vivian was taken by surprise.

"Mr. Richardson?"

"Edith! How long since you felt yourself constrained to be so entirely formal in your address? It was quite another thing when we were on the steamer."

"It was all so different," pleadingly. "It was an indiscretion. I suppose I cannot ask you to forget it."

"Do you want me to forget?" savagely. "Edith, I do not understand. What has changed you so?"

"Everything has changed. I am here among strangers. They are all very kind, so much kinder than I have any right to expect. Do you want me to bring discord and trouble among them at my first coming?"

"How can you bring trouble?"

"Why did you never tell me about Jessie?"

"I did tell you."

"But how? I fancied her an unformed school-girl, and I find her old beyond her years, the acknowledged head of the house. Do you want me to break her heart? Girls of that stamp are quite capable of it."

"Break her heart?" in pure amazement. "What do you mean?"

She looked at him half unbelieving that his stupidity was real. Her steady gaze brought some sort of comprehension into his mind.

"Jessie is my sister."

"There is not the slightest tie between you."

"She has never thought of it. We have always been brother and sister."

"Mr. Linton has not forgotten the truth at all events."

"What do you mean?"

"Nothing," sullenly.

"And is this the end of it all? You told me—at least you let me think that you loved me."

"It is generous of you to remind me. No," impulsively; "it is I who am wrong. You were always thoughtful and kind and good. But what can I do? It is my only home; if I embitter them against me, where can I turn—what can I do?"

"But you are wrong, I am sure. And if you are not, what does it matter? We have a right to each other."

But when did a man's impassioned pleading ever avail against a woman's cool determination? Richardson went away only half satisfied and yet appeased for the time, and Miss Vivian was a little absent-minded and sober all day.

With the summer months were not so very much changed. Little by little, as the subtle cloud of grief cleared itself out of Miss Vivian's wardrobe, her social talents began to be recognised. Jessie felt the added charm of her presence on the occasions when she herself played hostess. She had always been a little timid about it before; now she was nearly as self-possessed as her companion. I think even to herself she had never called her a friend. There was always that nameless chill of reserve between them.

Apparently, Richardson was not so happy under her influence. He was moody and rest-

less. Both Jessie and Mr. Linton saw and wondered at the change, without in the least comprehending the reasons for it. Miss Vivian never betrayed herself, and she managed with complete adroitness to avoid him. Sometimes, in spite of herself, she was forced to see him by himself for a little, but, try as he would, their relative positions changed very little.

When the summer came, the real, brilliant summer weather and summer heats, as usual, the Linton household was closed for a season. Mr. Linton was an indefatigable business man, and Jessie's seasons had usually been spent at some resort where her father could join her for the last of the week. But this year they were taken quite away. Mr. Linton spent a week with them, and went back to the city, reluctantly it seemed, but only half promising to come back for a while, later.

To one who did not know that Miss Vivian was still in her first year of mourning, the suspicion would hardly have presented itself that her wardrobe meant even mitigated grief. A great deal of white and some soft grey and an absence of showy jewellery—"a quiet taste in dress" that was hardly noticed in the charm of her manners and presence. For Miss Vivian had the finished repose of a thorough woman of the world, an infinite tact that was never at fault, and a sweet grace of speech that was never at loss for silvery replies to the most provoking or ill-bred talker in the little world of women at the seaside resort.

Before they returned, Richardson had decided to go to America again on some business connected with the firm. He told them of the decision himself, coming in on them unexpectedly one afternoon. They were playing croquet, under difficulties, on the small terrace kept level with a constant struggle against the sea wind and beach sand.

Jessie looked up from her game and saw him coming with the little group of arrivals from the last train.

"Oh, Edith," she called, "Harry has come. Miss Sprague, if you would just take my mallet for the rest of the game."

And she ran down to meet him before he reached the steps, and within five minutes knew why he had come and when he was going away. Miss Vivian did not come up till the game was finished. She was surprised, but not overcome.

Richardson was looking pale and thin. Some nameless trouble seemed haunting his eyes and voice. Jessie had seen too little of grief to understand; she only vaguely felt that something was wrong.

The next day was Sunday. In the early afternoon Harry and Miss Vivian strolled away down the sands. Jessie had supposed her spending the afternoon after her usual drowsy fashion, and was just preparing herself to go down for a long talk when she saw them go. She found that the surprise was half pain, too.

There was a lovely full moon that night. It came swinging up through the sunset tints that flushed all the East. She stood watching it when Harry touched her shoulder. She did not know that he had returned.

"Get your shawl," he said, "and come with me for a walk."

Poor little Jessie! Before she came back that night she had heard from Richardson's own lips a story that made her grow pale and shrank with a nameless pain. And yet, when she came to think it over, there was less told than implied.

Harry Richardson loved Edith Vivian. There had been a few weeks when he had believed that she loved him in return. But for all these months, ever since her landing, she had put him off, soothed him with vague protestations when she could not escape him; and now to-day, when he would no longer be evaded, telling him with cold frankness that she did not care for him any longer; that life had changed her; that he must give her her freedom wholly and unconditionally.

"And yet, oh, Jessie, she does care. I do not believe her. Some terrible ambition has taken possession of her. If she ever loved me, she loves me now. And yet what can I do? I



["OH, EDITH, HARRY HAS COME BACK."]

should be less than a man to trouble her, after what she has said."

He threw himself down on the sand beside her, and laid his face against her arm as he used to do in the days of his boyish despairs. And, as then, she soothed him with soft touches and silence.

"My little sister," he said, at last, with his voice broken by a sob.

Jessie felt very much like echoing the sob herself, but she choked down the pain. It was the very last time Harry Richardson gave any woman a chance to hear him wail over his lost love.

They went back to the hotel. If Miss Vivian looked at them a little curiously as they came in, it was the only sign she gave. Her manner was quite unchanged.

Jessie used to wonder at her after that. Harry's name came into their talk just as naturally and just as often as ever. She must have known that Jessie knew, and yet she gave no token of it. There never had been much confidence between the girls, so it was idle to say there was less now. Their apparent relations were the same. But one day, after they had returned home, Jessie stood up alone in the middle of her room, and said aloud—she had shut the door first:

"I wish Edith Vivian's father had not died."

And all there was to provoke such a remark was the fact that she had left Edith Vivian seated in the library, beside the grate-fire, in a particularly easy chair—Jessie's chair and Jessie's place in the old days, but Miss Vivian never seemed to know it—with her father opposite, while she herself, after fluttering about on the outskirts of the group, with a curious feeling of being one too many, had escaped from the room and taken refuge upstairs.

It was about a month after that, and Jessie had fallen into her first sweet sleep, when a light shone on her eyes and roused her. Miss Vivian stood beside her in her pretty evening dress. There had been an evening parlour concert, and Jessie had remained at home.

"Are you asleep? I want you to waken, dear."

"Yes," Jessie said, still drowsily.

Miss Vivian sat down beside her on the bed.

"I have something to tell you. You will not like it, I fear, and yet I must tell you. Try and be just to me, Jessie."

The girl heard the slow, careful words with a paralysed feeling that some terrible blow was coming, with a powerless sense of being unable to avoid it, as one has in a nightmare.

"Your father has asked me to marry him. I have promised him that I would."

She lay still a minute before she could realise the significance of the communication; the calm, still face was unchanged, the dark, inscrutable eyes fixed on hers. At last she gave a kind of gasp, as if coming back to consciousness, stirred a little, and sat up in her bed.

"I quite understand you," she said, coldly. "You can go now."

Miss Vivian absolutely stared for a breath. Then quite coolly she walked out of the room.

In her own room she walked up and down the floor a few times with firmly-folded arms.

"There will be no scene," she said, aloud.

She was right. Jessie was, as Miss Vivian had said, old beyond her years. She accepted the situation with a composure nearly as perfect as the lady's own.

The wedding took place on the anniversary of Edith Vivian's coming to Mr. Linton's house. It may have been simply chance that chose the day. Jessie saw in it a design too malicious to be forgiven or set down to thoughtlessness.

To everyone's surprise, Harry Richardson was back to the wedding. He landed a day or two before the event. Jessie was alone in the house when he came.

They looked at each other for a minute silently.

"So there is to be a wedding?" he said, with a half-sneer in the words.

Jessie hid her face on his shoulder.

"What made you come?"

"My dear, would you have me miss so happy

an occasion? I am sure Miss Vivian would have felt hurt at my absence."

The wedding was, in a stately and sober fashion, a very grand affair. From the first, Miss Vivian had petitioned for a quiet ceremony. It certainly was not John Linton's wish that half London, as it seemed to Jessie, should be interested in the proceedings. But the great church was crowded to its utmost, and the bride's dress was magnificent in its quiet richness. There was no parade of bridesmaids or floral decorations, nevertheless the occasion was a marked one in the social annals of that circle at least.

Jessie had developed a quiet pride that surprised herself. Before the wedding, her father—half-remonstrously it seemed—had arranged everything that could make her life independent of the new condition of things. She had her own apartments and her ample allowance. The two women rarely met except at meals and in public. Their treatment of each other was irreproachable. Censorious lookers-on found their mouths completely shut. Mrs. Linton matronized Jessie with her perfect tact, and never did nor said a word that could touch the radical discord between them. Richardson was abroad most of the time. His home was in the house, as of old, on his brief visits. His manner to Mrs. Linton was scrupulously polite. If there was a sneer under his deference, she never seemed to know it.

Just a year, and then Mrs. Linton was again the centre of public observation.

One day John Linton was brought home dead. A street accident, a falling wall, an item in the morning paper, and an obituary sketch, and all the world had changed to darkness for Jessie Linton.

The funeral was hardly less imposing than the wedding had been. Mrs. Linton was quite calm through it all. She was not less elegant in her widow's dress than in her bridal robes, and there was no one who did not pity her as she stood beside the grave—they had insisted on

going out with the others—white and still and coldish looking.

The two women lived on together. Both had an instinctive desire to avoid gossip, and there was no reason why they should separate. But the two years that hardly touched the sombreness of Jessie's dress had somehow by almost imperceptible changes eliminated much of the crimp from the older woman's.

There was nothing to be found fault with. There was nothing showy in her attire. No one could point to an unbecoming fold in her dress. She was not gay; she never forgot her position; yet Jessie felt a silent antagonism growing in her heart.

The summer before his death Mr. Linton had bought a pretty summer residence in the country. They were there now—Mrs. Linton and Jessie.

The house was full of visitors, young people mostly, and if there was little brilliant gaiety in the days, still Mrs. Linton entertained faultlessly, and there were also no stinted opportunities for flirtation.

Among the guests were Mrs. Gaston and her son—Americans, old acquaintances of Mrs. Linton in her former life.

Richardson was at the house one evening. He came occasionally. It seemed to Jessie that in Mrs. Linton's manner to him there had been a change. She was no longer coldly indifferent. A half-timid, pleading tone came into her voice at times—a look of depreciation, instead of the level, slightly surprised gaze of former days, when he said the harsh things that had become habitual with him now.

He did not shun women, but they were afraid of him. All but Jessie; he never sneered at her, and rarely in her presence—too openly. But she never for an hour forgot that Sunday night by the sea.

A slight rain had been falling all the afternoon, and all the Linton guests were gathered in the parlours or on the broad balconies opening from them. The Gastons had been with them three weeks, Richardson since yesterday.

Felix Gaston had been talking with Jessie half an hour. He seemed especially to affect her society—a preference by no means mutual. Mrs. Linton had come up at last, and with a word had swept him away with her, to Jessie's intense relief. She leaned back in her chair and looked out across the darkening river.

"Don't you like it?" It was Harry's voice. She gave a little start, and looked up at him gratefully.

"Are all Americans like that?" "Isn't that enjoyable?" Mrs. Linton thinks so."

"Harry!" answering the tone rather than the words.

"Look here;" he wheeled the revolving chair in which she sat. At the end of the darkening parlours two figures stood alone, relieved against the faint brightness of the French window. It was her step-mother and Felix Gaston.

There was nothing that all might not see, and yet Jessie caught her breath sharply.

"Oh, Harry!" And then—she did not mean to—"Do you care?"

He coloured to his brows. "Yes," he said, harshly. "I hope you will try and understand that. A woman for whom I have no respect, in whom I have no faith, has the power to give me a heart-ache that haunts me night and day. Your father's wife, my dear."

Jessie hid her face in her hands with a sob. It was not often her composure failed; when it did there were tears in a torrent.

Mrs. Linton came out. "What is the matter?" she said, sharply. "Your presence seems to have a very disturbing effect," to Richardson.

"On whom?" with a bitter smile. "Not on you, nor your amusements, madame."

"Oh, Harry!" half under her breath.

Jessie could not see, sobbing behind her handkerchief, the quick, shy, soft upward look, the tender, grieving curve of the fine lips.

He flushed again, stirred uneasily, and turned his back.

That night Richardson sat smoking late, until the house was quite still. A shaded light burned softly in the tower where Mrs. Linton had her rooms. He sat and watched it till the night waned.

There came a step behind him—a soft, light step; a dark-draped figure stood by his chair.

"It is I," putting out a white hand. "I could not sleep till you had told me that there was peace between us."

"I do not understand you, Mrs. Linton. Has there ever been anything else?"

"You are very cruel," she faltered. "Have you forgotten all the past?"

"I have not forgotten that you were the wife of the man to whom I owe everything that I know of a father's care. Pardon me, do you think your presence here, at this hour and under the circumstances, quite—in good taste?"

She answered him with a smothered cry.

"You do love me!" she said.

"Yes," quietly—"a love that means neither respect nor faith. Do you care for that? I do not understand women's tastes very well. Had you not better go in now? The night is damp."

He rose and gave her his arm as ceremoniously as if they had stood in a crowded ball-room. There was nothing to do but take it, and let him lead her back to her own room.

Not a shadow of that scene on her face next morning. She answered the mocking light in his eyes with a look as calm as a child's.

But he was restless and moody all day. He was gay by fits, and when Harry Richardson chose he was the magnetic centre of every room he entered. That had been Gaston's specialty heretofore.

All at once, between the two, a sudden dislike seemed to spring into being. Jessie became conscious of an under-current of deeper meaning than the dancing, singing troop of summer visitors seemed to guess.

"I am going to stay a week," Harry said to her. "I am going to see the end."

"What do you mean?"

"Wait and see."

And Jessie waited. She was not a very prominent figure in Mrs. Linton's household. She had too little heart in the gaieties of the days. She went her own way quietly, and saw more than anyone dreamed of.

Mrs. Linton seemed hovering between the two men, whose dislike to each other was no secret to anyone in the house. In the tact that prevented open rupture that others praised, she found a deprecating appeal to Richardson, and to Gaston a claim on his personal regard. She puzzled over it. Harry would not explain, only smile. She seemed in those days to be walking in the midst of veiled and masked figures, whose relations to each other were as mysterious as all the rest.

One evening the social atmosphere seemed overcharged with electrical influences. There were fewer guests in the house than usual, and everyone felt nervous and excited, as if before an impending storm. It had come to open hostilities between the two men—as far, at least, as two well-bred men of society can manifest that state of things in a lady's drawing-room. Mr. Gaston and his mother were to sail for home in a few days; they were talking about the journey.

"Do you remember your voyage when you came from America?" Richardson put the question abruptly to Mrs. Linton.

She quailed for an instant, but her composure came back almost at once.

"Very distinctly."

"Should you like to repeat it under the same circumstances?" in a tone that jarred on Jessie's nerves. She tried to speak, to divert the talk, and the words would not come. Mrs. Linton was very pale.

"Hardly," she said. "I remember that it stormed every day that we were out."

"That was in January. June is a much more comfortable month."

There was nothing in that, and yet everyone

felt a little thrill, as if there was danger near. Gaston rose with an undisguised frown. Richardson looked at him with that exasperating smile, and turned to Jessie.

"Have you ever been on the bridge on the hill road at midnight?"

"Dear me, no," with a vain attempt at being at ease. "I have too much regard for my own comfort to be exploring the country at that hour of the night."

Mrs. Linton was white as a ghost. Jessie leaned toward her.

"Edith"—it was seldom enough that the name crossed her lips—"I want you to play the accompaniment for that new song of Henschel's. Miss Reeves, I am sure you will like it. Harry, you are to sing with me."

At midnight a closed carriage stood on the bridge on the hill road. A dark-wrapped woman's figure came up the path leaning on a man's arm.

"Is it all right, driver?"

"All right, sir. Just a minute. There's a buckle loose."

In the minute another figure came up the path carelessly, quite as if the situation was a matter of course.

With an oath Gaston seized his revolver. There was a slight click; Mrs. Linton threw herself forward.

"Don't disturb yourself," Richardson said, coolly. "Mrs. Linton will need another wrap. At least I supposed you had forgotten it. Permit me," opening the carriage door.

He assisted her in, while Gaston stood stupefied.

"You are sure you are entirely comfortable?" with his hand still on the door.

"Thank you. You were always very thoughtful," in a voice as cool as his own.

"They have gone."

Jessie had been waiting, as the little note that followed her when she left the parlour that night had asked her, and then she heard the whole story.

Three years later there was a quiet wedding in the Linton parlours. Harry Richardson is a perfectly contented and well-to-do member of the community, and Jessie has as few regrets as women ever have. As I said, men do not often marry their first loves.

OUR COLUMNS FOR THE CURIOUS.

ANCIENT SPANISH CATHEDRALS.—You walk from end to end over a floor of tombstones, inlaid in brass with the forms of the departed, mitres and crowns, spears and shields, and helmets, all mingled together—all worn into glass-like smoothness by the feet and knees of long-departed worshippers. Around on every side, each in their separate chapel, sleep undisturbed from age to age the venerable ashes of the holiest or the loftiest that of old came thither to worship—their images and their dying prayers sculptured into the resting-places of their remains.

A TRADITION OF SNOWDON.—There is a curious tradition respecting a large stone on the ascent of Snowdon, called the black stone of Arddu. It is said that if two persons were to sleep a night on this stone, on the morrow one would find himself endowed with the gift of poetry, while his companion would have become insane.

MOORISH FUNERAL CUSTOM.—It is a custom among the Moors that a female who dies unmarried is clothed for interment in wedding apparel, and a bridal song is sung over her remains before they are borne from her home.

BELLS IN MOSCOW.—The numberless bells of

Moscow, says Clarke in his *Travels*, continue to ring during the whole of Easter week, tinkling and tolling without harmony or order. The large bell near the cathedral is only used on important occasions; when it sounds a deep, hollow murmur vibrates all over Moscow, like the fullest tones of a vast organ or the rolling of distant thunder. This bell is suspended in a tower called the belfry of St. Ivan, beneath others, which, though of a less size, are enormous; it is forty feet nine inches in circumference, sixteen and a-half inches thick, and weighs more than fifty-seven tons. The great bell of Moscow is in a deep pit in the Kremlin. The history of its fall is a fable, for the bell was never suspended. A fire took place in the Kremlin, the flames of which caught the building erected over the pit in which the bell yet remained; in consequence of this the metal became hot, and water thrown to extinguish the fire fell upon the bell, causing the fracture which has taken place. The bell is truly a mountain of metal, and is said to contain a large proportion of gold and silver, for that, while it was in fusion, the nobles and people cast in as votive offerings their plate and money.

DESCRIPTION OF THE THRONE OF KOOLBUGA.—This throne was nine feet in length and three in breadth, made of ebony, covered with plates of pure gold and set with precious stones of immense value. Every prince of the house of Bhamenee, who possessed this throne, made a point of adding to it some rich stones, so that when in the reign of Sultan Mahmood it was taken to pieces to remove some of the jewels to be set in vases and cups the jewellers valued it at nearly four millions sterling. "I learned also," says an old writer, "that it was called Firozeh, from being partly enamelled of a sky-blue colour, which in time was totally concealed by the number of jewels."

THE ALHAMBRA.—A writer of the seventeenth century thus describes the Alhambra:—Passing round the corner of the emperor's palace you are admitted at a plain unornamented door in a corner. On my first visit I confess I was struck with amazement as I stepped over the threshold to find myself on a sudden transported into a species of fairyland. The first place you come to is the court called the Communa, that is the common baths, an oblong square with a deep basin of clear water in the middle, two flights of marble steps leading to the bottom, on each side a parterre of flowers and a row of orange trees. Round the court runs a peristyle paved with marble. The arches bear upon very slight pillars, in proportions and style different from all the regular orders of architecture. The ceilings and walls are encrusted with fretwork in stucco, so minute and intricate that the most patient draughtsman would find it difficult to follow it unless he made himself master of the general plan.

TIN MANUFACTORY IN DEVONSHIRE.—In King John's time there was more tin found in the county of Devonshire than in Cornwall. For it appears that the coinage of Devonshire was then set to farm for £100 per annum, whereas that of Cornwall yielded but 100 marks; and according to this proportion the tenth thereof (£6 13s. 4d.) is at this day paid by the crown to the Bishop of Exeter. But King John did not first bestow these tenths upon the Church, as some say, for he only restored them upon a complaint made by the bishop that those who rented the stannaries refused to pay him his due.

THE GREEN ISLANDS OF THE OCEAN were supposed to be the abode of the Fair Family, or souls of virtuous Druids who could not enter the Christian Heaven, but were permitted to enjoy a paradise of their own. Gafra, a distinguished British chieftain of the fifth century, went on a voyage with his family to discover these islands, but they were never heard of afterwards. This event, the voyage of Merdlin Emrys with his twelve bards and the expedition of Madoc, were called the three losses by disappearance to the island of Britain.

THE DIVINING ROD.—The use of the divining rod, although of great antiquity, was only introduced into this country in the reign of Queen Anne by a Spanish renegade named Reberia.

Pryce thus describes the construction and use of the rod:—The rods formerly used were shoots of one year's growth that grew forked; but it is found that two separate shoots, tied together with some vegetable substance, as pack-thread, will answer rather better than those which are grown forked, as their shoots being seldom of equal length and thickness they do not handle so well as the others which may be chosen exactly of the same size. The shape of the rod thus prepared will be between two and a half and three feet long. They must be tied together at their great root ends, the smaller being held in the hands. Hazel rods cut in the winter, such as are used for fishing-rods, and kept till they are dry do best, though when these are not at hand apple-tree suckers, rods from peach trees, currants or the oak, though green, will answer tolerably well. It is very difficult to describe the manner of holding and using the rod; it ought to be held in the hands, the smaller ends lying flat or parallel to the horizon and the upper part in an elevation, not perpendicular to it but seventy degrees. The rod being properly held by those by whom it will answer, when the toe of the right foot is within the semi-diameter of the piece of metal or other subject of the rod, it will be repelled towards the face and continue to do so while the foot is kept from touching or being directly over the subject, in which case it will be sensibly and strongly attracted and be quite drawn down. The rod should be firmly and steadily grasped, for if when it hath begun to be attracted there should be the least imaginable jerk or opposition to its attraction it will not move any more until the hands are opened and a fresh grasp taken. The writer goes on to inform us that a little practice by a person in earnest about it will soon give him the necessary adroitness in the use of this instrument, but it must be particularly observed that a man must hold the rod with the same indifference and inattention to its effects as he holds a walking-stick or a fishing-rod, for if the mind be occupied by doubts, reasoning or any other operation that engages the animal spirits, it will divert their powers from being exerted in this process in which their instrumentality is absolutely necessary; from hence it is that the rod constantly answers in the hands of peasants, women and children, who hold it simply without puzzling their minds with doubts or reasonings.

FATA MORGANA.—This remarkable aerial phenomenon, which is thought by the lower order of Sicilians to be the work of a fairy, is thus described by Father Angelucci:—On the 15th August, 1648, I was surprised as I stood at my window with a most wonderful spectacle. The sea that washes the Sicilian shore swelled up and became for ten miles in length like a chain of dark mountains, while the waters near our Calabrian coast grew smooth and in an instant appeared like one clear, polished mirror. On this glass was depicted in chiaroscuro a string of several thousands of pilasters, all equal in height, distance and degrees of light and shade. In a moment they bent into arcades, like Roman aqueducts. A long cornice was next formed at the top and above it rose innumerable castles, all perfectly alike; these again turned into towers, which were shortly after lost in colonnades, then windows, and at last ended in pines, cypresses and other trees.

A BARD'S PROPHETIC.—The Irish bard, Carolan, could never, even in his gayest moods, compose a planxty for a Miss Brett, in the county of Sligo, whose father's house he frequented and where he always met with a reception due to his exquisite taste and mental endowments. One day, after an unsuccessful attempt to compose something in the sprightly strain for this lady, he drew his harp down with a mixture of rage and grief, and addressing himself in Irish to her mother, "Madame," said he, "I have often from my great respect to your family attempted a planxty in order to celebrate your daughter's perfection, but to no purpose. Some evil genius hovers over me; there is not a string in my harp that does not vibrate a melancholy sound when I set about this task. I fear she is not doomed to remain long among us;

nay," said he, emphatically, "she will not survive twelve months." The event verified the prediction, and the young lady died within the period limited by the unconsciously prophetic bard.

PRINTING IN EARLY DAYS.—Printing was carried to Rome in 1460, in the time of Pope Paul II., and that pontiff liberally encouraged the printer, who prepared under his auspices the first elegant round Roman character. They also invented such a variety of spaces as kept a beautiful distance between the words, an arrangement to which but little attention had been paid before. Venice became noted at an early period for the beauty of the Gothic types used by the printers settled in that city. The character now called Italic was invented by Aldus, a famous Venetian printer, and called by him Aldine. It was used in printing quotations, until set aside in this respect by the double commas, or Guillemetes, as they were first called, after their inventor, a French printer, of that name. Before the year 1470 the art was introduced into France, and the Parisian printers obtained an early reputation for the beauty of their types, as well as for the fineness and correctness of their impressions.

MISCELLANEOUS.

UPWARDS of 100 fishermen belonging to Great Yarmouth are now believed to have perished in the late gale, in addition to seven fishing luggers. The Great Yarmouth herring fishery has been almost at a standstill since the gale.

THE PRINCESS PAULINE METTERNICH.—The Princess Pauline Metternich has been robbed of jewellery worth £1,000 on the way from Vienna to Milan. The utmost insecurity prevails on certain Italian railways. Within the last year a large quantity of luggage and valuables has been stolen in the most audacious manner.

A WELL-authenticated case of the death of a centenarian is reported from Copenhagen, New York, where Mr. Levi Robbins, a highly respected public man, has died at the age of 101 years. Mr. Robbins had been a member of the Assembly, in which he sat for Lewis county as far back as the year 1819.

As people in the country villages have been unable to see the apertures in the wall letterboxes after dark, Mr. Rea, the post-office surveyor for the eastern countries district, has caused the apertures of the wall boxes in the neighbourhood of Cambridge to be encircled with luminous paint. The experiment has been successful.

Her Majesty's Government have appointed the Earl of Fife, K.T., to go on a special mission to Dresden to invest the King of Saxony with the Order of the Garter. The mission will not leave until after Christmas.

LADY MOUNT-TEMPLE.—Lady Mount-Temple has become a vice-president of the Vegetarian Society.

To "out Herod-Herod" will no longer be the saying expressive of exaggeration. It must in future be transformed into "out Sarah-Sarah," for her ambition has induced her to order a dress to be worn in the Dame aux Camelias which will completely outshine that of the disguised Princess in *Peau d'Ane*, when the Prince spying through the crack in the shutter of the hut beholds the poor cottage girl attired in a robe made of the rays of the sun! Sarah Bernhardt's marvellous costume consists of a robe of blue satin-electric with a train of velvet blue-saies, the corsage being entirely covered with electric jet, which "sends forth rays as bright and changeful as though it were one mass of diamonds," says the journal of fashion which, after describing the startling effect of this extraordinary costume, goes on to detail the beauties of thirty other dresses destined to strike the natives of the Hague and Amsterdam dumb with amazement.

The Queen has been pleased to raise Lord Lyons, G.C.B., Her Majesty's Ambassador at Paris, to the rank of a viscount. Lord Lyons has occupied his present post at Paris since 1867.

He succeeded his father, the first Baron Lyons, in 1858.

The word "News" was formed from the initial letters of the points of the compass.

A HIGHLY interesting exhibition will shortly be opened at the Westminster Aquarium, which ought to have an especial attraction for ladies. It will consist of wedding dresses, marriage trousseaux, wedding favours, bridecakes, bridal bouquets, and articles suitable for wedding presents.

There is a belief that Mr. Fawcett will entertain the idea of telegrams at a penny a word, no message to be under sixpence.

CAPTAIN GEORGE HOPE VERNEY, who a short time since suggested in a letter to the "Times" the introduction of "four-handed chess" to give variety to the queen of games, has, in answer to numerous correspondents, published a little book (Routledge and Sons) explaining the mode of play in the new game. The chess-board is increased in size to 160 squares, and two sets of chessmen are used; 'white and yellow' facing each other are partners, and red and black, also facing each other, are partners. The shape of the board is peculiar, and a diagram must be seen in order to clearly understand the new game. The attacking forces instead of meeting each other face to face are confronted as they emerge from the side. The moves are the same as in ordinary chess, with some slight modification.

In the event of the weather becoming Siberian a few notes on furs may please elegantes. Muffs are very small in otter, satin, velvet and plush, ornamented rather than trimmed with moire, satin, and humming birds. There are plaits of velvet, rows of lace, and conqueror's knots; the interior is a veritable museum in parvo for the card case, purse, handkerchiefs, scent bottle, fairy looking glass, and a tiny box of powder. Fur muffs in otter are very general, and the same material is in favour for toques and mantles; skunk serves to border mantles in plush or damask; blue fox is a royal fur that modest purses cannot approach; castor, astrakan, and chinchilla will be less worn this winter.

THERE is a new invention, or perhaps it might be termed a discovery, which promises to do wonders for wine bibbers, namely, a method for rendering all wines sparkling with the purest carbonic acid gas, and this without their coming into contact with any metal whatever.

At the accession of her Majesty the Duke of Cumberland, ex-King of Hanover, was heir presumptive to the Crown. There are now the Queen's eight children, twenty-four grandchildren, and great-grandchildren between the Duke of Cumberland and the Throne.

At the Food Exhibition at the Agricultural Hall was a brownish-coloured object about the size of a skin of lard, and it was labelled "Zulu cheese, made by the youngest wife of Cetewayo."

It is not often one hears of a clergyman indulging in the delectation of publishing his own banus; but this has recently been the case of one holding the cure of Lambourne.

A NEW game at cards has been devised by "Hamish," called Elite. The object of the inventor has been to produce a form of whist which can be joined in by three, four, five and six persons.

It is a great consolation to the poor man to know that even an excess of riches cannot secure the possessor from disquietude. The richest man in the world, he of the great Bonanza Mine, Mr. Mackay, in short, has just been subjected to the most cruel anxiety which can befall a man of nervous and excitable temperament, the dread and suspicion of danger constantly hovering near him, ready to burst forth at any moment, a danger which cannot be opposed or averted, and yet the nature of the peril impossible to be ascertained. Mr. Mackay has just returned to Paris from a lengthened tour through Germany, Sweden, and Russia, and during the whole of the journey has been followed by a stranger, evidently American like himself, who invariably took the same trains, alighted at the same hotels, and was always held at a certain distance watching his move-

ments whenever he sought repose at any of the places where he might chance to stop, and all this without ever addressing a word to the object of his scrutiny, or explaining to any other person the motive of this singular behaviour! Of course speculation is afloat, and this pertinacity on the part of the spy is attributed by some to a heavy wager laid on the other side of the Atlantic, by others to the necessity of conveying instant information to the Bonanza should any accident have happened to Mr. Mackay during his travels.

REJECTED.

"FORGIVE you and forget you." Yes, and gladly, if I may.

Forget the cruel wrong you do, forgive the lie you say;

For you have wounded deeply, girl; the wound is bleeding yet;

But memory is so bitter it is better to forget.

Your drooping eyes, your gentle smile, your sweetly winning way,

The siren guile to lure me on and then my love betray.

And it was so; 'twas like a flower half shrinking from the sky,

You culled it, breathed its sweets awhile, then cast it off to die.

I do not wish you ill, but, oh! if wishing were not vain,

I'd wish my heart within your breast one moment with its pain;

One moment only, only one—it were enough to show,

And you would feel, if you could feel, the torment that I know.

Ah, well! 'tis but another dream passed from the world away,

And thousands such as it are born and die with every day;

It was fair the while it lasted—Sodom fruit is always fair—

But when I raised it to my lips it turned to ashes there.

I will hide the seared ruin you have made within my heart,

I will conquer every longing that for you has held a part;

I will not bear a pang to feel, nor show it if I would;

I will not e'en retain a thought to hate you if I could.

It well may be a bitter thing to speak the word "Farewell,"

But lips unloved may calmly breathe what others fear to tell;

I tear your love from out my heart, your image from my mind,

And turning thus, I leave for aye all thought of you behind.

J. K. D.

GEMS OF THOUGHT.

THE more haste a man makes to unravel a skein of thread the more he entangles it.

SLENDER kills threefold—him that utters, him that is attacked, and him that hearkens.

A MAN's character is like a fence—it cannot be strengthened by whitewash.

NATURE has sometimes made a fool, but a coxcomb is always of a man's own making.

If you fall into misfortune, disengage yourself as well as you can. Creep through those bushes which have the fewest briars.

SPARE moments are the gold dust of time. Of all the portions of our life spare moments are the most fruitful in good or evil.

THESE cannot be a pleasant smile upon the

lips of the hopeless. The blow which crushes the life will shatter the smile.

THE empire of woman is an empire of softness, of address, of complacency; her commands are caresses, her menaces are tears.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

JAM SAUCE.—This is an easy sauce to make for puddings. Take a tablespoonful of raspberry jam, two tablespoonfuls of water, half an ounce of powdered sugar, and half a teaspoonful of butter; put in water first, then butter, and next sugar, and then add jam; when it is nearly boiling take it off and add a wineglassful of sherry or brandy, or instead of water you can use all red wine.

CHOCOLATE CAKE, I.—One cup of sugar, tablespoonful of butter, one heaping cup of flour, one teaspoonful of cream tartar sifted in flour, and half a teaspoonful of soda dissolved in a tablespoonful of sweet milk. Filling—Whites of three eggs beaten to a stiff froth, one cup of sugar (pulverised), and three tablespoonfuls of grated chocolate, and vanilla to taste. Bake the cake in jelly cake tins in three layers, and spread the mixture between and on top. Eat within thirty-six hours after baking.

CHOCOLATE CAKE, II.—One cupful of butter, two of sugar, two and a half of flour, one of sour milk, five eggs, one teaspoonful of soda dissolved in hot water, and half a cake of Baker's chocolate grated; cream your butter and sugar, beat your eggs very light, yolks and whites separately of course; dissolve your soda, and add your chocolate just before the flour and whites of the eggs; bake in jelly cake tins in five or six, according to size. Filling—One and a quarter pounds of white sugar dissolved in a very little cold water; beat the whites of three eggs, not to a stiff froth; then stir in the remainder of the cake of chocolate grated; cook in boiling water until thick; flavour with vanilla, and spread between the layers and on top; should not be eaten until the day after baking, and will keep several days.

STATISTICS.

SKULL MEASUREMENTS.—Professor Fowler has published some further results of his researches with reference to the human skull. He states that the largest normal skull he has ever measured was as much as 2,075 cubic centimetres; the smallest, 960 cubic centimetres, this belonging to one of those peculiar people in the centre of Ceylon who are now nearly extinct. The largest average capacity of any human head he has measured is that of a race of long flat-headed people on the West Coast of Africa. The Laplanders and Esquimaux, though a very small people, have very large skulls, the latter giving an average measurement of 1,546; the English skull of the lower grades shows 1,542; the Japanese, 1,486; Chinese, 1,424; modern Italian, 1,475; ancient Egyptian, 1,464; Hindoos, 1,306.

CENSUS OF JAPAN.—According to the latest census the population of Japan on January 1, 1880, was 35,925,313. Of these 18,210,500 were males, and 17,714,813 females. When the numerous and destructive civil wars of the last twenty years are remembered, this relative proportion of the sexes will appear striking. Writers of the last century held very exaggerated notions of the population of Japanese towns, but the present census shows that some of them may properly rank among the most populous cities in the world. Tokio and its environs has a population of 957,121; Kioto, the old capital, of 822,098; and Osaka, 582,668. The smallest population of any district is that of the Bonin Islands, recently annexed to Japan, which contain only 156 inhabitants, composed of officials and descendants of Kanakas and deserters from English and American whaling vessels.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

P. V.—Modern science declares the sun to be a vast globe of matter, either melted by intense heat or white hot. This fiery globe is surrounded by an ocean of gas, and this gas is on fire. This ocean of fire, enveloping the heated solid body or liquid mass of the sun, is estimated to be about fifty thousand miles deep. The stars are all suns, many of them thousands of times greater than our sun, and affording vastly more light and heat than does our sun. Were our globe placed as near to some of these stars as it is to the sun, all animal and vegetable life would not only be instantly destroyed, but all metals, and even the very rocks would be melted, and the whole mass reduced to a molten or liquid state, as it was thousands of years before it cooled down and assumed its present form.

H. D.—To make sarsaparilla syrup for mineral waters, take simple syrup, four pints; compound syrup of sarsaparilla, four fluid ounces; caramel, one and a half ounces; oil of wintergreen, six drops; oil of sassafras, six drops. Mix.

H. S.—An aromatic mixture of iron is made by digesting one ounce of iron filings for two or three days in three fluid ounces of lemon juice. Add half an ounce each of bruised gentian and cinnamon, and sixteen ounces of sherry wine. After twenty-four hours decant and filter.

L. B.—The mode employed in blueing steel is merely to subject it to heat. The dark blue is produced at a temperature of 600 degrees. The steel must be finely polished on its surface, and then exposed to a uniform degree of heat. Wood ashes for fine work will be found the most effective. The steel must be well covered over, and carefully watched. When of the right colour, which may be ascertained by removing a little of the ashes, take out the steel.

F. W.—A very fair Cologne may be made as follows: Take alcohol—say five quarts—and dissolve in it essence of lavender, three drams; essence of thyme and clove, each a quarter of a dram; essence of lemon, one ounce; essence of bergamot, seven drams; essence of rosemary, two ounces; rose water, one pint; orange-flower water, one pint. Let stand two weeks, filter, and bottle.

B. B.—To make chicken tea, cut up a fowl in small pieces; put it into an earthen vessel containing three pints of water. Add a little salt, and let boil for three hours. Strain it; set it to cool six or eight hours, and then take off the fat. The tea will be like a jelly.

J. G.—The Welsh language is of Celtic origin. The Celts had two distinct languages, each of which was divided into several dialects. These languages are known as the Breton and the Gaelic. The Breton included the Welsh, the Cornish, recently extinct, and the Bas Breton, now spoken in the western half of Brittany in France. The Welsh call their language Cymraeg.

E. H.—Grasses can be crystallised as follows: Put into an earthen vessel one pound of alum in small lumps; pour nearly a gallon of water upon it and let it boil. Tie up the grasses in small bunches; pour the alum water into an earthen jar, and place a stick across it, from which suspend the grasses into the liquid. Set the jar in a cool place and do not disturb it for twenty-four hours. Remove the grasses, and see that they are dry before using.

A CONSTANT READER.—"Accidents will happen," etc. The master has not escaped our notice, but we are obliged to you for calling attention to it.

A. J. P.—Grace Darling was born at Bamborough, on the coast of Northumberland, November 24, 1815, and died October 20, 1842. Her father was keeper of the Longstone lighthouse, on one of the most exposed of the Farne Islands. On the night of September 6, 1838, the Forfarshire steamer, proceeding from Hull to Dundee, was wrecked on one of the crags of the Farne group, and of fifty-three persons on board thirty-eight perished. On the morning of the 7th the survivors were discovered by Grace, clinging to the rocks and the remnants of the vessel, in imminent danger of being washed off by the returning tide. Grace, with the assistance of her parents, but against their remonstrances, launched a boat and with her father rescued nine of them, and six escaped by other means. Presents and demonstrations of admiration were showered upon her from all parts of the United Kingdom, and a public subscription of £600 was raised for her.

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It is with some satisfaction that we announce to our readers that this successful story, written by Mr. Bracebridge Hemyng, and first published in our columns, has been reproduced, with the consent of the proprietor of the *LONDON READER*, in a Three Volume Novel by Mr. Maxwell, the eminent publisher, the husband of Miss Braddon.

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Also will be commenced in 972 a Serial Story by the well-known author, Mr. Ernest Brent, entitled

A LONG ESTRANGEMENT.

A MID-SUMMER NIGHT STORY.

Deep in the birken scented shade
The brook a sylvan murmur made,
As thro' the blossom-tangled glade
We came at eve—my love and I;
With many a shafted avenue,
And branching aisle, the woodland grew—
With here and there, in gold and blue,
A lovely glimpse of sunset sky.

By separate ways the glade we sought,
Each with the same intent and thought,
To test the weird enchantment wrought
At fall of sweet mid-summer night:
For whoso'er, with charm and spell,
Invokes, within the haunted dell,
The influence of the "Wishing Well,"
Shall win true love, in Fate's despite!

And we had fallen out one day—
Had broken troth, and flung away
The love that we had pledged for aye—
And, fired with angry scorn, we parted;
So, masked in cold indifference,
Or hollow mirth, that hid the sense
Of bitter loss—ah, vain pretence!
We went our dull ways, empty-hearted.

A year dragged by; as strangers meet,
We met, by chance, with looks discreet—
Our guarded lips schooled to repeat
Their soulless social courtesies;
And still—her faithful worshipper—
I marked, as in the days that were,
Some leaven of the old love stir
Beneath her cold, repellent guise!

And in my heart a purpose grew,
As flowers, bereft of sun and dew,
Sometimes a sickly bloom renew
When winds are chill by croft and grove,
To seek, when sweet mid-summer fell,
The green haunts of the fairy dell,
And learn, beside the Wishing Well,
The sequel of our thwarted love!

With many a startled glance behind,
And footfalls stealthy as the wind,
She came; my bounding heart divined
Her presence, while, securely hidden
Beneath a bowery arch of bloom—
Half-drown in nectarous perfume—
I watched thro' eve's translucent gloom
Her wistful mignon face unhidden.

From midst the nodding reeds that grew
About the dimpling pool she drew
A quaint cup, crystal-clear as dew,
And thrice she dipped it in the tide—
And thrice I heard her lips repeat
My name, with incantations meet,
While some sweet spirit in my feet
Drew me, all breathless, to her side!

She bent above the Wishing Well,
Where the white rays of moonlight fell
She looked—and, lo! a miracle.

For, like a glowing silhouette drawn
Against the softly mirrored skies
Beneath, she saw, with startled eyes,
A face lean out of paradise,
All flushed with hope's transcendent dawn!

She turned—a rapture in her face
That made sweet light in that dim place,
And fondly locked in close embrace,
Among the nodding reeds and heather,
We stood in speechless ecstasy:
Ah! little need of words had we,
Whose walks and talks, henceforth, would be
Through all the ways of life—together!

E. B. and S. S., two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony.

E. B. is twenty-four, medium height, dark, brown hair and eyes, fond of home. S. S. is twenty-three, medium height, fair, brown hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home.

MAGGIE, seventeen, tall, fair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a dark young gentleman about twenty.

POLLY, eighteen, medium height, fair, brown hair and eyes, good-looking, would like to correspond with a young gentleman between twenty and twenty-three.

LOTTIE and STELLA, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Lottie is twenty-four, tall, dark, dark hair and eyes, fond of home and music. Stella is twenty-three, tall, fair, light hair, hazel eyes, fond of home and music.

EDWARD, nineteen, medium height, dark, good-looking, of a loving disposition, fond of home, would like to correspond with a young lady between sixteen and eighteen.

SNOWDROP and ROSALINE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. Snowdrop is nineteen, tall, fair, good-looking, fond of music and dancing. Rosaline is twenty-three, medium height, dark, good-looking, fond of dancing.

COLIN, twenty-seven, tall, dark, dark hair, hazel eyes, good-looking, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony.

RUN, twenty-two, medium height, dark, good-looking, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young gentleman about twenty-five.

ALMA and ELSIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Alma is twenty, tall, dark, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children. Elsie is eighteen, medium height, brown hair, hazel eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children. Respondents must be about twenty-one, tall, dark, of a loving disposition.

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